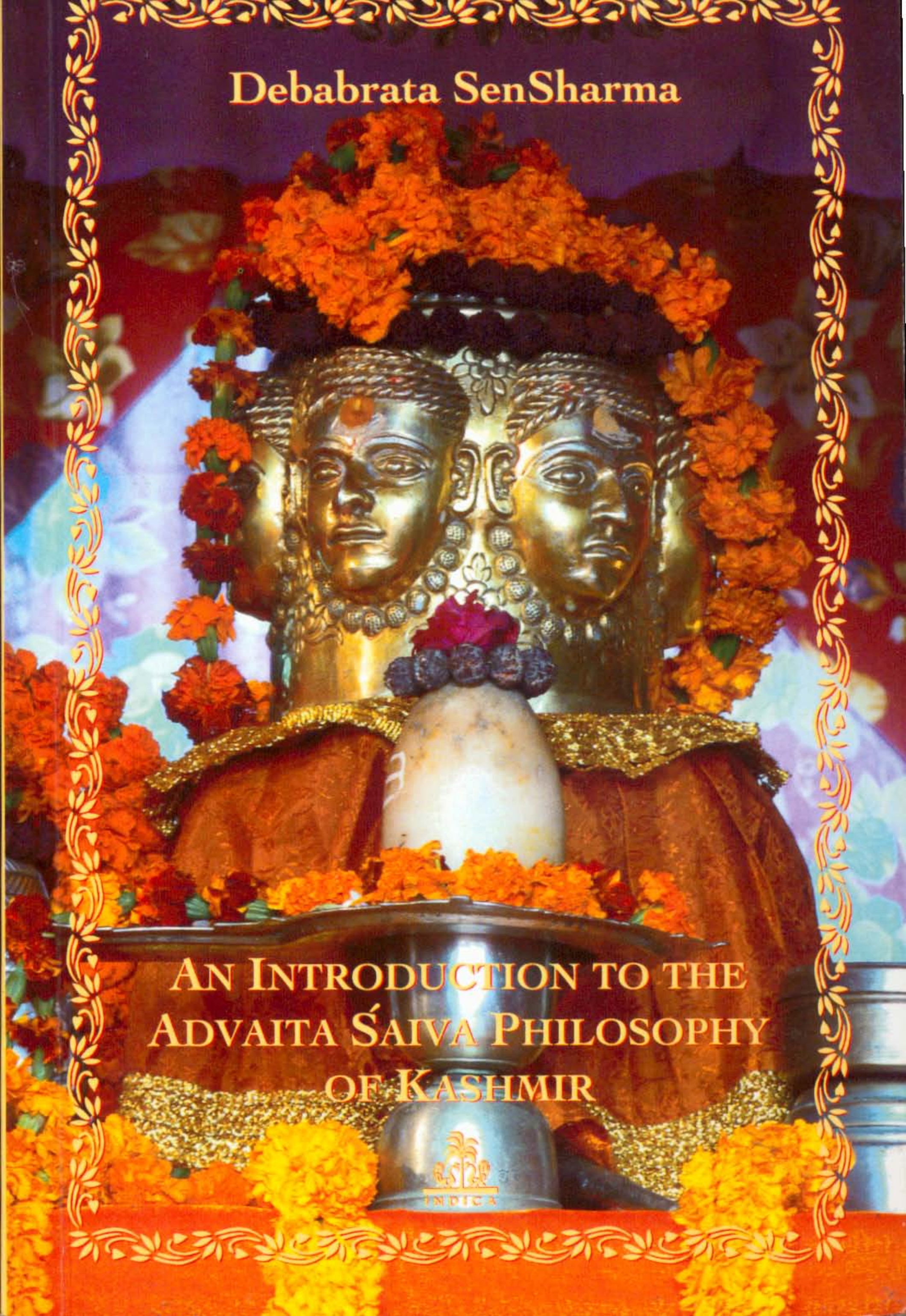
Debabrata SenSharma



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ADVAITA ŚAIVA PHILOSOPHY OF KASHMIR

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Dedicated

with profound respects to the revered

Swami Chidvilasananda



Swami Chidvilasananda

Contents

PREFACE

The Advaita Śaiva philosophy of Kashmir, traditionally known by various names such as *Trikaśāsana*, *Trikaśāstra*, *Ṣaḍardhaśāstra*, *Pratyabhijñāśāstra* or *Rahasya Sampradāya*, popularly called Kashmir Shaivism, embodies the highest spiritual wisdom gleaned from the *Śaiva* and the *Śaktāgamas* interpreted by the Advaita *Śaivācāryas* to yield non-dualistic meaning. When I was studying some important texts in Sanskrit more than fifty years ago with the well known savant Mahāmahopādhyāya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj at Varanasi for many years for writing my Ph.D. dissertation on 'The Philosophy of Sādhanā', I heard him many times that this spiritual philosophy represents the acme in the development of Indian Spiritual thought. Very often he used to cite many parallels from the spiritual thought of other religions of the world, e.g. Coptic Christianity, the Greek Orthodox Church, Catholic Christianity, Sufism, Judaism, etc. to show the universal character of the Advaita Śaiva spiritual thought. A few years before he left his mortal remains at Varanasi, he asked me to continue studying Advaita Śaiva philosophy and disseminate its sublime thought in the world through my writings. I am following my revered Guru's command in letter and spirit all these years. The present book represents my humble contribution in that direction.

This book is broadly divided under two parts — *Book One, Historical*, describing briefly the origin and development of the Śaiva thought in general, and the Advaita Śaiva thought in Kashmir in particular; *Book Two* discussing under four chapters various aspects of the metaphysical thought of this school. I have focussed my attention on those metaphysical ideas projected by the Advaita Śaiva writers that appear to be novel and as innovations, and as such, marking their distinct contributions to Indian philosophical thought.

The Advaita Śaivas are the staunch protagonists of the theory of integral non-dualism (*akhaṇḍādvaitavāda*). The second chapter, entitled 'Nature of the Supreme Reality', opens with the examination of this particular kind of non-dualism and its implication in the metaphysical field *vis-à-vis* other forms of non-dualism projected by other schools of Indian philosophy. The Advaita Śaivas describe the nature of the Supreme Reality, one without a second, in two different ways namely, as *Caitanya* or *Saṁvid* as an abstract metaphysical principle (*nirākāra tattva*) as well as Parama Śiva and Parameśvara possessing a form (*sākāra* Being). The justification for their delineation of the Supreme Reality in two divergent forms side by side has been stated in this chapter. The Advaita Śaiva philosophers describe the Supreme Reality as the transcendent Absolute (*anuttara*) and at the same time as all-pervasive Reality (*Viśvātmaka*) — a metaphysical theory not seen elsewhere in any other school of Indian philosophy. Their integral approach in their views is reflected in their conceiving the ultimate Reality being endowed with Divine Śakti as inalienable aspect.

The theory of creation figures in the metaphysical thought projections of all schools of Indian philosophy. The Advaita Śaiva philosophers have not only shed light on the process of the world manifestation in the conventional way, they have added a new dimension to it by describing it in terms of involution (*avaroha*) on the part of *Caitanya* to the gross level of matter; or as the unfoldment (*unmeṣa*) on the part of the Supreme Lord (*Parameśvara*) out of His free will (*Svacchayā*), exercising His *svātantrya śakti*; or as His self-extension in the aspect of His Śakti (*svaśaktisphāra*). It may be pointed out that the manifestation of the universe is universally recognised in all theistic schools of Indian philosophy as divine Play (*līlā*) on the part of the Godhead. While agreeing with this description in principle, the Advaita Śaivas modify slightly the idea of divine Play by using the metaphor of drama (*jagannāṭaka*). They describe the world manifestation as a drama enacted by Parama Śiva, playing the role of Naṭarāja and also participating actively therein assuming

different roles (*bhūmikā*) and experiencing ecstatic delight (*ānanda*) — a fact which may also be regarded as the motivating force in His self-manifestation as the Universe. All these novel ideas relating to creation have been explained in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter discusses the mature of man, a key figure in the world manifestation, and also evaluates his status in the creation. It has been stated that embodied man is the self-contracted form of the Supreme Lord (*Parameśvara*) who is enveloped by the veil of *māyā* and her progeny of five sheaths (*kañcukas*) and enwrapped by psycho-physical frame-work, i.e. the body caused by a defilement called *kārmamala*. The Advaita Śaiva philosophers mention seven different kinds of experients or subjects (*pramātā*), a concept unique in the annals of Indian philosophy. The nature of these experients embodied, unembodied, and disembodied has been exposed. Light also has been shed on the theory of twofold ignorance, technically called *bauddha ajñāna* (ignorance about the nature of the self, having its seat in the intellect) and *pauruṣa ajñāna* (ignorance arising from self-contraction) and their counterparts, the *pauruṣa jñāna* and the *bauddha jñāna*. Abhinavagupta, the celebrated exponent of the Advaita Śaiva thought has described the process of universal manifestation in terms of denoted (*vācaka*) and denoter (*vācya*). The denoted is represented by the thirty-six *tattvas* and different modes of the functioning of the divine Śakti while the denoter (*vācya*) is symbolised by the pulsations of the divine Śakti (*spanda*) underlying all *tattvas*, described in terms of *mātṛkā varṇas*, i.e. letters of the *devanāgarī* alphabet (*varṇamālā*) beginning with '*a*' *varṇa* and ending with '*ha*' *varṇa*. The deeper meaning of this esoteric concept and its implications can be understood when the nature of *pūrṇāhaṁtā* (pure I-experience indicative of the Fullness nature of the Self) is examined. This concept has been discussed in this chapter. The nature of *sādhakas*' self-experience as *Sivo'ham* (I am Śiva), involving this concept of *pūrṇāhaṁtā*, has also been explained.

Some key concepts like the nature of *citta* (the 'mirror' of all experiences), *kāla* (time), *deśa* (space), all belonging to the domain

of metaphysics, and *prāṇa* (vital air), its origin and role in life in the mundane plane and the spiritual practices, the nature of *mantra* (sacred words) and its application in spiritual practices — all related to *sādhanā* — constitute the subject matter of the concluding fifth chapter. I have included these topics in this book dealing with the philosophy of the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir for two reasons — one, the spiritual discipline forms an integral part of the religio-philosophical thought of this school, and our knowledge of the philosophy of this school would remain incomplete if we exclude these key concepts from our exposition; two, the examination of these key concepts would enable us to highlight the contribution made by this school to enrich our ancient spiritual heritage. It may be mentioned here that generally these topics do not find place in the books on the philosophy of this school.

I must first acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the revered Swami Chidvilasananda, popularly known among her disciples as Gurumayi, for encouraging me to continue my studies in the field of Kashmir Śaivism and showering her blessings on me. I am grateful to her for allowing me to dedicate this book to her as my humble offering with profound respects.

I am deeply indebted to my Guru late Mahāmahopādhyāya Gopinath Kaviraj for initiating me in the study of abstruse texts on the Advaita Śaiva philosophy of Kashmir and giving me insight in grasping the deep spiritual meaning encoded in them; to the late Dr. Kanti Chandra Pandey for his learned pioneering work in the field of this school; to the late revered Swami Lakshman Joo for providing with authentic and lucid exposition of subjects pertaining to *sādhanā*.

I am grateful to all my teachers Professor Arabinda Basu and Professor Gobinda Gopal Mukhopadhyaya, the latter in particular for encouraging me to write this book and for going through the first drafts and giving me many valuable suggestions.

I express my gratefulness to Mr. Alvaro Enterria, Publications Director of Indica Books, and Mr. Michael Ianuzielo working there, for carefully going through the manuscript, editing the text and

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Last but not the least, I am also thankful to my wife Mrs. Dipika Sensharma, my daughters Alakananda and Madhucchanda and my grand-daughter Pratyusha.

I am conscious of my limitations for which I solicit apology from my readers. Despite all care, many errors in printing might have crept in for which I crave their indulgence.

Debabrata Sensharma
Kolkata

BOOK ONE : HISTORICAL

~Chapter I~

Origin and Development of the Advaita Śaiva Thought in India

1. Preliminary remarks

Śaivism is one of the most ancient and powerful currents of religious philosophy in the world. It arose in the hoary past and has survived in India throughout the centuries. Some historians trace its origin as a religious cult to the aboriginal civilizations inhabiting India long before the advent of the Aryans, on the basis of the discovery of seals depicting the image of Paśupati at several prehistoric sites in western India, along the Indus and Sarasvati rivers. However, more recent studies by Indian historians have discredited the myth of the influx of Aryan people into this subcontinent in the centuries before the Common Era. The discovery of icons resembling Śiva-*liṅgams* at several places in Sumeria and Mesopotamia in the Middle-east have strengthened the theory that Śaiva religious cult did not owe its origin to aboriginal tribes. It prevailed in many countries outside the geographical limits of modern India.

Ancient Indian tradition, however, traces the origins of the Śaiva cult to the Āgamic thought current, which is believed to be as ancient as the Vedic systems.[1] However, it must be admitted in fairness that there is no literary evidence to support the theory of any parallel existence of Āgamic and Vedic ideologies.

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[1] *Mālinīvijayavārtika*, I, 49; *Parātriṁśikāvivaraṇa*, p. 53.

It may be pointed that a careful scrutiny of the Vedic texts, especially of the Upaniṣads — e.g. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* — reveals the presence of particular spiritual ideas interspersed with Vedic thoughts; for instance, some Upaniṣads refer to certain secret *vidyās* (*rahasya vidyā*) such as *madhu vidyā*, *dahara vidyā* and the like, which are indicative of the presence of Āgamic ideas mixed with the dominant Vedic thought. In those days, these secret *vidyās* were popular with select groups of spiritual practitioners who were interested more in pursuing the path of spiritual discipline (*sādhanā*) than in understanding the metaphysical thoughts of the Upaniṣads. That is why no detailed description of these *vidyā*s occurs in the Upaniṣads.

Many scholars believe that the *Atharvaveda* is the source from which the Āgamic thought current emanated. This may or may not be true, but it is an acknowledged fact that there is a profusion of descriptions of occult practices which testify to the affinity between Vedic and Āgamic thought.

So far as the origin of Śaivism is concerned, there is some evidence to prove the existence of a nascent form of a Śaiva cult in the *Ṛgveda* and *Yajurveda*. A *mantra* in Sūkta 136 of Maṇḍala X of the *Ṛgveda* refers to a seer named Keśin who was probably a leader of a sect which bore a resemblance to that of Śaiva *sannyāsins*. It is said that members of this sect wore ochre-coloured cloth and moved from place to place while semi-naked. They would sometimes drink *viṣa*, not *soma*, with the Vedic god Rudra. Some scholars think that this Rudra represents the Śiva of a later date, on the basis of certain characteristic epithets used for him which appear to be more appropriate to Śiva than to any other God.

The *Śatarudrīya* portion of the *Yajurveda*,[2] while enumerating one hundred names of Rudra, depicts him as both saviour and destroyer. This description of the Vedic Rudra is so similar to the description of the Paurāṇika Śiva that scholars unhesitatingly identify them as one.

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[2] *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* IV, 4, 1, *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā* 9, 16.

However, it is in the Upaniṣads that we find positive evidence to prove the existence of the Śaiva cult as one of the prominent cults in that period. The name 'Śiva' applied to a particular deity appears for the first time in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.[3] This has led some scholars to hold the view that this Upaniṣad marks the beginning of Śaivism as a distinct school of philosophical thought.

We find definite evidence of the existence of worshippers of Śiva in a *sūtra*[4] in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, where he defined the terms which denoted 'a worshipper of Śiva'. In his *Mahābhāṣya*, Patañjali describes bearing a *sūla* and a staff and being dressed in animal skins as characteristic of a Śiva *bhakta*.

The Greek historian Quihitas Cartius, and Deodoras, contemporary to Alexander the Great, have referred to a sect of people who lived near the confluence of the rivers Vitastā and Candrabhāgā as being devotees of Śiva. Archaeological evidence — such as silver and copper coins with the figure of a bull or Śiva inscribed on them, minted during the reign of such Kuṣāṇa kings as Gondaphares, Kadaphasis and Kaniṣka — also supports the theory that Śaivism was popular in this country between the 2nd century B.C.E. and the 1st century C.E.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* speak about the Śaiva school of thought during that period. The *Mahābhārata* explicitly mentions the Pāśupata school among the five schools (like Sāmkhya, Yoga and the like) in the *Śāntiparvan*.

The influence of the Śaiva philosophical thought on the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools is well known. Haribhadra Sūrī in his *Ṣaḍ-darśanasamuccaya* has mentioned that the founders of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools were all Śaiva. All this literary and archaeological evidence proves the antiquity of Śaivism as one of the prominent religious cults in Ancient India.

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[3] *Op. cit.*, IV, 14 & 16; V, 14.

[4] *Op. cit.*, IV, 1, 112.

2. Development of Śaivism as a school of religious philosophy

In the foregoing section, the antiquity of Śaivism as a religious cult has been established on the basis of literary and archaeological evidence. A survey of ancient India religious literature reveals the development of as many as eight schools of Śaiva religious philosophy in different parts of the country at different times. The list of schools includes Pāśupata, Lakulīśa Pāśupata, Nandikeśvara Śaivism, Śaiva Siddhānta, Raseśvara Śaivism, Trika Śaivism of the Vīraśaivism and the Viśiṣṭādvaita Śaivism of Śrīkaṇṭha.

In his *Tantrāloka*,[5] Abhinavagupta suggested the classification of Śaiva philosophical thought into dualistic (*dvaita*), dualistic-*cum*-nondualistic (*dvaitādvaita*) and nondualistic (*advaita*) divisions; these were said to have originated from Śiva, Rudra and Bhairava respectively. Accordingly, any Śaiva school can be put under one of these three broad headings on the basis of the philosophical thought they propagate. The two schools of Pāśupata Śaivism and Śaiva Siddhānta can be placed under dualistic schools, while Lakulīśa Pāśupata and Vīraśaiva schools are categorized as dualistic-*cum*-nondualistic schools. Four schools, namely the Nandikeśvara Śaiva school, the Raseśvara Śaiva school, the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of Śaivism of Śrīkaṇṭha — prevailing in the South — and the Trika Śaiva school, popularly called Kāśmīra Śaivism, can be classified as purely non-dualistic schools of Śaivism.

Historically speaking, the Pāśupata school of Śaivism is the most ancient school of Śaivism; it prevailed in the western part of the country many centuries before Christ. Scholars differ on the identity of the Pāśupata school, as some believe that Pāśupata Śaivism and Lakulīśa Pāśupata Śaivism are one and the same school, both holding their sway in the western and northwestern part of the country respectively. The seals discovered at Mohenjodaro and Harappa prove the

[5] *Op. cit.*, I, 37, 38.

popularity of the Pāśupata school there. Scholars like K.C. Pandey have mustered sufficient evidence to prove their independent existence,[6] with the Lakulīśa Pāśupata school being relatively more recent than the Pāśupata School. From the standpoint of the philosophical points of view they propagate, the Pāśupata and the Lakulīśa Pāśupata must be two different schools of Śaivism, as Pāśupatas preached a dualistic philosophy, and the Lakulīśa Pāśupata propagated a dualistic-*cum*-nondualistic philosophical thought.

Pāśupatas have been referred to by name by Śaṅkarācārya in his *bhāṣya* on the *Brahmasūtra* (*Pāśupatādhikaraṇa*); both Haribhadrasūrī in his *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* and Rājaśekhara have mentioned that no literature which might shed any light on their philosophy has come down to us. It is through some references mentioned in the texts mentioned above, and in Bādarāyana's *Vedānta Sūtras*[7] (in the Vedāntic commentaries, namely *Ratnaprabhā* and Ānandagirīya), that we get some information about their philosophy. Bādarāyaṇa has criticized their dualistic thought. We know from Vedantic commentaries like *Bhāmati* and *Ratnaprabhā* that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools of philosophical thought were indebted to that of the Pāśupata in propounding their scheme of world-creation, in which *Īśvara* plays a crucial role. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that Śaṅkarācārya and Ānandagiri referred to four more Śaiva sects prevailing in those day, these schools being the Kālāmukha, Kāruṇika Śaiva, Śaivasiddhānta and Soma. The Kālāmukhas bear affinity to Aghorī Śaivas, and still can be found in Kerala. They are called Kālāmukhas on account of their followers moving about with their faces painted black.

The founder of the Lakulīśa Pāśupatas lived in the Kathiawar region during the 2nd century C.E. In an inscription found near Mathura dated 380-81 C.E., Lakulīśa is mentioned as the founder of a Pāśupata school. It also cites eleven generations of Pāśupata Śaiva gurus, from

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[6] *Outline of the History of Saivism.*

[7] *Op. cit.* II, ii, 7.

Lakulīśa to Maheśvarācārya Udita. Some legends found in the Purāṇas described him as being an incarnation of Lord Śiva. The *Pāśupata sūtras*, which propone a dualistic-*cum*-nondualistic Śaiva philosophy, are ascribed to him. It postulates two ultimate categories of reality, *Pati* (the supreme Lord) and *paśu* (fettered individual beings), who are said to have a dualistic-*cum*-nondualistic relationship with each other. It is said that *Pati* possesses infinite power (*ananta śakti*) and infinite knowledge (*ananta jnāna*) which constitute the essence of his divinity, while *paśu* (the fettered being) is covered by five kinds of defilements (*malas*), such as false knowledge, demerit and the like. Kauṇḍinya wrote a commentary on the *Pāśupata sūtras* which, together with some other *sūtras*, constitute the basic book of this school. The celebrated Nyāya scholar Bhāsarvajña wrote the *Gaṇa Kārikā*, which has been referred to by Madhavācārya in his *Sarva-darśana Saṁgraha*, a compendium including it under the title *Pāśupatamata*. Other important texts exposing the philosophy of the *Lakulīśa Pāśupata school* are the *Yama Prakaraṇa* by Viśuddhamuni and the *Kāraṇapadārtha* by an unknown author. Names of some prominent Śaiva teachers like Kauśika, Gargya, Mitra and Karusavya occur in the Purāṇas.

Śiddhānta Śaivism is one of the few schools that has an extensive literature in both Tamil and Sanskrit, and also has following today in South India (Tāmil Nādu). Like the older Pāśupata school, it propagates a dualistic philosophy. Based on twenty-eight Āgamas which were revealed by Lord Śiva himself, it is said that this Śaiva school was was propounded by 84 Śaiva Saints; Santa Apparā, Jñāna-sambandha, Sundaramati and Manikka Nayaka are most famous among them. Sadyajyoti, who flourished in the 9th century C.E., was a famous exponent of this school in Sanskrit. He is said to have written commentaries on the *Rauravāgama* and *Svayambhuva Āgama*, giving them a dualistic interpretation. He also wrote a number of original texts in Sanskrit, such as the *Bhogakārikās*, *Mokṣakārikā*, *Tattvasaṁgaraha*, to shed light on the philosophy of Śiddhānta Śaivism. Abhinavagupta recognized him as an authority on dualistic

Śaivism, referring him as 'Kheṭapāla' or 'Kheṭaṇḍa', while refuting his dualistic Śiddhānta Śaiva philosophy. Other well-known exponents of this school were Bṛhaspati, Śaṅkarānanda, (the author of the *Prajñātamkara*), Devabala, Rāmkaṇṭha, Śrīkaṇṭha (the author of the *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* and the *Nādakārikā*), Aghora Śivācārya. Devabala, Rāmakaṇṭha and Śrīkanta hailed from Kashmir and have been frequently mentioned by writers on Trika Śaivism. Śaiva Siddhāntins postulate three categories: *Pati* (the supreme Lord), *paśu* (limited beings) and *pāśa* (fetter). The relation between *Pati* and *paśu* is one of difference (*bheda*), thereby making room for *bhakti* (the feeling of devotion) in their philosophical thought. Śaiva Siddhāntins had influenced some Trika writers who wrote *stotras* (devotional poems) giving to the sentiment of *bhakti* a place in their non-dual philosophy. Mādhavacārya has given a summary of the main tenets of this school in his *Sarvadarśana saṁgraha*.

Another southern school of Śaivism is that of the Vīraśaiva. It was founded by a Śaivācārya called Revaṇa, and propagates the dualistic-*cum*-nondualistic philosophy. His name (along with names of two Śaivācāryas, Marula and Ekorama), is mentioned by Śrīpati Paṇḍitārādhya in his Śaiva commentary on the *Vedānta sūtras* of Bādarāyana. Śrīpati Paṇḍitārādhya was a prolific writer; well-known among his works are the *Siddhānta Śikhāmani* and the *Tantrasāra Prakāśika*. Basava, who flourished in the 12th century in Karnataka, was also a well-known exponent of this school. He is credited with starting the practice of wearing a small *liṅga*. The followers of this school are today called *Liṅgāyats*.

So far we have given bird's eye view of the origin and development of different Śaiva schools propagating both dualistic and dualistic-*cum*-nondualistic philosophies. Let us now turn our attention to those schools of Śaivism which profess a purely non-dualistic philosophy.

The most ancient school propagating a purely non-dualist thought is the Nandikeśvara school of Śaivism, which was founded by Nandikeśvara. He composed the *Nandikeśvara Kārikā* on which

Upamanyu wrote a commentary. It is claimed that Nandikeśvara was a contemporary of the celebrated Pāṇini. According to one well-known scholar, when Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* speaks about a *brahmarṣi* as being the author of fourteen *sūtras* called the *Māheśvarasūtras*, he is actually referring to Nandikeśvara — but it is a fact that he does explicitly mention Nandikeśvara by name as being the author of the *Māheśvarasūtras*, upon which the entire structure of *Aṣṭādhyāyī* stands. In his *Kārikā*, Nandikeśvara talks about Paramaśiva as the Supreme Reality, calling his Śakti '*Svātantrya śakti*' as we find in the Trika philosophy of Kaśmīra. He talks about 36 *tattvas* constituting the world-manifestation; however, these are not the same as those seen in the metaphysical thought-projections of the Trika School.

The Raseśvara school of Śaivism is yet another non-dualistic school mentioned by Mādhavācārya in his *Sarvadarśana Saṁgraha*, a compendium of Indian philosophical schools. He gives a brief description of the main tenets of this school, which was said to have been started by some unnamed Māheśvarācārya who postulated the supremacy of *rasa*. Nāgārjuna, the famous exponent of the Buddhist Mādhyamika School, refers to this school as one which taught alchemy. Possibly, the theory that *rasa* was connected to the therapeutic use of mercury led to this conclusion. Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the well-known Sanskrit prose writer, also mentions the Raseśvara school as propagating alchemy. Unfortunately, no literature expounding the philosophy of this school is available now.

Śrīkaṇṭha was the founder of yet another school of non-dualist Śaivism. He was probably from the South who followed the footsteps of Utpalācārya (10th century C.E.), the author of the *Īśvarapratya-bhijñā Kārikā*. He introduced the doctrine of qualified monism (*vi-śiṣṭādvaitavāda*) within Śaiva thought. He wrote a commentary on the *Vedānta sūtras* of Bādarayāna called *Śrīkaṇṭha bhāṣya* in which he tried to bridge the gulf between the Vedic and Agamic thought-currents by comparing the non-dual doctrine of the Advaita Vedāntins to that of Trika Śaivism. He was thus a precursor of the trend in

philosophical thinking which was later called Samāyācāra. Lakṣmīdhara, Bhāskararāya and Appya Dīkṣita were the great protagonists of this school of thought.

The emergence of the Trika school of Śaivism in Kashmir marks the climax in the development of the Advaita Śaiva thought, being backed up by a rich Sanskrit literature, written in Kashmir. It is for this reason that this school has been called Kashmir Śaivism by modern writers. It is a misnomer, as there were other streams of Śaiva thought in Kashmir before the rise of the Trika school of Śaivism. This will be surveyed in some detail separately, in the following section.

3. Origin and growth of the Advaita Śaiva school in Kashmir

We begin a brief description of the development of this school of thought by first considering the significance of the term '*pratyabhijñā*', which was used by Madhavacārya in his *Sarvadarśana Saṁgraha* to summarise the ideas of this school of Śaivism. The term 'Trika' was used by Abhinavagupta in his writings, and '*śivādvaitavāda*' by other writers on the philosophy of this school.

The term *pratyabhijñā* literally means re-cognition. The doctrine of recognition constitutes the cardinal doctrine in the philosophy of the Advaita Śaiva School; hence, some named this school of Śaivism after this doctrine. In his *Śivadṛṣṭi*, Somānanda was the first *ācārya* to refer to this doctrine as a means to attain *śivatva* (that is, to realize one's essence as being Śiva nature). His disciple Utpaladeva took great pains to explain the process of recognition in his book the *Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*, shedding light on its role towards the realization of one's Śiva-nature. This work became very popular, hence its name became synonymous with the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir. As a matter of fact, this work attempted to discuss in detail the philosophy of this school of Śaivism, the main tenets of its philosophy on rational ground, as is often seen in the philosophical texts of other schools of Indian philosophy. It is said that, with the resolve to manifest Himself as the universe, the supreme Lord imposes limitation

on Himself and veils himself with *māyā* and *prakṛti*. The *māyā* and *prakṛti śaktis* not only veil His true nature, these make the self-contracted monadic beings forget their true essence. The *sādhaka* (spiritual seeker) has to try to discover his real being by removing the various veils, to thereafter recognize his essence, much in the same way as one does on meeting a particular person (Devadatta, for example) after a very long time, and then recognizing him and saying — "Aha, he is the same person (Devadatta) whom I met in Varanasi twelve years ago."

The term 'Trika' has been used by Abhinavagupta to signify the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir. He has given various reasons in different texts to explain the appropriateness of the name Trika, which are as follows:

1) It is said that out of the sixty-four *Bhairava Āgamas* propagating a non-dualistic form of Śaivism, the triad (*trika*) of the *Mālinī*, *Siddha* and the *Nāmaka Āgamas* is of greatest importance. In fact, the philosophy of non-dualistic Śaivism is based on these three *āgama*s, hence it is called the Trika school (T.A. I, 25).

2) This school venerates three important triads: Śiva, Śakti and their union; Śiva, *śakti* and *nara* (the embodied individual being); and *parāśakti*, *aparāśakti* and *parāparaśakti*. Therefore, the name 'Trika' given to this school seems most appropriate.[8]

3) It postulates three modes for achieving the highest knowledge, non-dual (*abheda*) nondual-*cum*-dual (*bhedābheda*) and dual (*bheda*); hence, this school is called 'Trika'.

4) The literature explaining the philosophy of this school has come down to us in three district forms, namely Āgama Śāstra, Spanda Śāstra and Pratyabhijñā, hence this school is called Trika.

It may be pointed out here that some Western scholars have identified these *śāstras* with three originally independent schools

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[8] It must be noted that Śakti here has been used to signify the personified divine power, therefore the Advaita Śaiva writers use the pronoun 'She' to denote it. Elsewhere the word *śakti* is used to signify the divine power functioning coalesced with the *śaktimān*, i.e. Śiva.

developed during different periods of time, saying that these were later synthesized and harmonized by Śaiva writers to form what is now called 'Trika'. This is a far-fetched idea invented by Western scholars which militates against age-old tradition. As a matter of fact, the three *śāstra*s or streams of thought mentioned above represent three phases in the development of this school which later emerged as a powerful school which is now called Trika Śaivism. We notice a similar situation in the development of different schools of Indian philosophy, as for instance in Sāṁkhya, Nyāya and Advaita Vedānta. The existence of an ancient school of Sāṁkhya in the Upaniṣads and the Mahābhārata, a classical Sāṁkhya started by Īśvarakṛṣṇa, and a Sāṁkhya philosophy explained by Vijñānabhikṣa are all well known. We are familiar with both the older school Nyāya as well as the later school of Navya Nyāya started by Gaṅgeśa, which spawned schools of Navya Nyāya with seats in Mithila and Navadwipa.

Trika Śaiva thought, as expressed by *Āgama Śāstra*, is believed to exist eternally. According to an ancient legend mentioned in the *Śrīkaṇṭha Saṁhitā* (now lost) and referred to by Abhinavagupta in the introduction of his *Tantrāloka* and explained by Jayaratha in his commentary thereon, Lord Śiva appeared in the form of Svacchandanātha in the beginning of Satyayuga, the first *yuga* (era) in a fourfold cycle. He had five heads which were the seats for the activity of five *śakti*s, namely, *cit śakti* (consciousness-power), *ānanda śakti* (bliss-power), *icchā śakti* (will-power), *jñāna śakti* (knowledge-power) and *kriyā śakti* (active-power). It is held that, while operating, these powers took the form of streams of knowledge to illumine the world, flowing from the five mouths of the five heads known respectively as Īśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva and Aghora; this was a result of the divine grace showered by the Lord Śiva upon humanity, suffering in creation. The entire corpus of the Tantras emerged from these five mouths which opened at the four different directions with the fifth on the top, singly or in different combinations of the mouths. It is also mentioned in the *Śrīkaṇṭhī Saṁhitā* that ten Tantras or Āgamas called the *Śaivāgamas* which preached dualistic

thought emerged from the mouth called Īśāna. These Āgamas are not directly connected with Trika thought. A group of eighteen Tantras called the *Raudrāgamas* emerged from the combined mouths of Īśāna and Tatpuruṣa, propagating monistic-*cum*-dualistic thought. Some *Rudrāgamas* were referred to by the Trika writers in a limited way on account of the presence of non-dualistic thought mixed with dualistic thought.

A group of sixty-four tantras called the *Bhairava Tantras* issued from the Aghora mouth of Śiva, which opened on the topmost side (*urdhva vaktra*) whilst the rest of the four mouths remained closed. Their combined *śakti* pushed out sixty-four Tantras preaching pure non-dualistic Śaiva thought. These Tantras or Āgamas are said to be connected closely with the Trika school of Śaivism, forming, as it were, the source of its inspiration.

During the first three successive eras (*yugas*) of Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara, both the spiritual teachers and their disciples were endowed with extraordinary intellect. Therefore, when the spiritual teacher uttered the spiritual truth, the disciple did not take any time to grasp it. No need was then felt during that period to reduce the oral teaching to a concrete form. The transmission was direct and oral, and there was no need for them to write anything down.

But when the Kali era began, the entire atmosphere was marked by a 'pollution' which was caused by a dominance of ignorance, evil and sin. According to tradition, the enlightened spiritual teachers and their disciples hid themselves in unknown places to avoid contact with this pollution. As a result of this, the *Bhairava Tantras* disappeared completely. Along with them, the non-dualistic form of Śaivism represented by Trika also went underground, leaving people in suffering. Lord Śiva is regarded as the embodiment of mercy who showers His grace unconditionally on everyone. He is always ready to illuminate the minds of all with the light of spiritual wisdom, without making any distinction. He is therefore said to have reappeared on the earthly Kailāsa mountain in the form of Śrikaṇṭha.

It has been mentioned in some Sanskrit texts on Trika philosophy that Lord Śiva appeared in a dream before the sage Vasugupta (the founder of this school, in the last quarter of the 8th century, or in the beginning of the 9th), expressing his distress at the disappearance of the *Bhairava Tantras* in the beginning of the Kali era. In particular, He expressed his deep anguish concerning how the Advaita Śaiva tradition had dried up. He did not recreate the entire lost corpus of *Bhairava Tantras*, but offered to provide Vasugupta with the essence of these Tantras in the form of the *Śivasūtras*. Lord Śiva told him that he had inscribed the *sūtras* on a stone slab called Śaṁkaropala on the mountain known as the Mahadevagiri, situated behind the modern Shalimara gardens, just outside the city of Srinagar. He asked Vasugupta to find them and teach them to his disciples. In this way, the purely non-dualistic teachings of Trika Śaivism were revived in Kashmir through the sage Vasugupta. Vasugupta was therefore not the author of the *Śiva Sūtras*, as he merely discovered them as directed by Lord Śiva Himself; however, historically speaking, the credit of reviving the lost Advaita Śaiva tradition based on the *Bhairavāgamas* goes to him. He taught the Advaita Śaivism to his disciples based on the study of the *Śivasūtras*, which is the first written text on the Advaita Śaiva or Trika school of Śaivism. The *Śivasūtras* are, therefore, included under the division of *Āgamas*.

The text of the *Śivasūtra*, which is also called the *Śivopaniṣat-saṁgraha*, contains a total of 77 *sūtras* divided under three sections: the *Śāmbhavopāya* of 22 *sūtras*, the *Śāktopāya* with 10 *sūtras*, and the *Ānavopāya* containing 45 *sūtra*s. This arrangement of *sūtras* was made by the commentators Kṣemarāja and Bhāskara Kaṇṭha in their respective commentaries, the *Vimarśinī* and the *Vārttika*.

It is not known how many commentaries were written on the *Śivasūtra*s, but only four have come down to us. The oldest and most lucid commentary is the *Śivasūtra Vimarśinī* by Kṣemarāja (10th C.), which explains the meaning of each *sūtra* in prose. He mentions a *vṛtti* (commentary) written by some unknown writer and it was used by him as the framework for elaboration in his *Vimarśinī* commentary;

unfortunately, this *vṛtti* is not available to us. The next *vṛtti* is the *Śiva Sūtra Varttika* by Bhāskarakaṇṭha; he gives its lineage in the text in the following way. He tells us that sage Vasugupta taught the *Śivasūtras* to his disciple Kallaṭa (9th century) who taught them to Pradyumna Bhaṭṭa. Pradyumna Bhaṭṭa taught them to Prajñārjuna who, in turn, taught them to his pupil Mahadeva Bhaṭṭa. This one taught them to his son Śrīkaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa, and Bhāskara learnt the *sūtras* from Śrīkaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa. Bhāskara (11th century) gives all this information in his *Vārttika*, written in verse form. Another available commentary, written by Varadarāja in the 15th century, is also called the *Śiva Sūtra Vārttikam*.

As already mentioned, the Āgama phase in the development of the Trika philosophy includes a few Tantric texts interpreted from the perspective of Advaita Śaiva thought. Out of the three Tantric texts directly linked with Advaita Śaiva thought mentioned by Abhinavagupta, the *Siddha* and *Mālinī Vijayottara* are foremost. The identity of *Siddha* is not known for certain. Some scholars posit that the text of *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* is the same as *Siddha*. The text of the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* is not available in full. Only one fragment of this Tantra is available in manuscript form, which has not yet been published. According to some scholars, the *Mālinī Vijayottaratantra* represents a fragment of the larger text of *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*.

Abhinavagupta looks upon *Malinī Vijayottara Tantra* as the foremost representative text of the non-dualistic Śaiva *tāntrika* tradition on account of its close resemblance to the philosophy of the Trika School. It is a text written in verse form containing chapters (*adhikāras*) covering the entire gamut of Advaita Śaiva thought.

Abhinavagupta, the greatest exponent of the Trika philosophy, wrote a commentary in verse form called the *Malinī Vijayavārttika*. The distinguishing feature of this commentary is that it does not give a word-by-word explanation, as is generally seen in other commentaries. Abhinavagupta has chosen the first verse, which generally contains the entire contents of the text in a nutshell, to elaborate on his exposition of the philosophy of the Trika school in such a way

that his commentary, the *Malinī Vijayavārttika*, appears to be an independent text rather than a commentary on the *Mālinī Vijayottaratantra*. This text is divided into two sections.

As has been observed in the foregoing pages, Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka* mentioned three Tantric texts as the source of Advaita Śaiva thought, namely the *Siddha*, the *Mālinivijayottara Tantra* and the *Namaka Tantra*. We have already discussed the *Siddha* and *Mālinivijayottara Tantras*; we excluded the *Namaka* as no text bearing that name has come down to us. V.V. Dwivedi has opined that the name of the third text should be *Vamaka*, not *Namaka*, which is probably a scribal error. He thinks that the *Vamaka* is none other than the *Vāmakeśvara Tantra* which is available to us.

Abhinavagupta selected 35 verses from the voluminous *Rudrayāmala Tantra*, available only in fragments, as the most authoritative part of the Āgama, shedding light on the absolute philosophy of the Trika School. He has written a commentary called *Vivaraṇa* on these verses, calling his text the *Parātriṁśikā*. It is a valuable text belonging to the Āgamic stream.

Other texts belonging to the Āgama are the *Svacchanda Tantra*, the *Netra Tantra* and the *Vijñānabhairava Tantra*; all these also have an affiliation with the Advaita Śaiva philosophy, and as such, these are freely quoted withing it.

The *Svacchanda Tantra* is a voluminous text published in six volumes with Kṣemarāja's commentary, the *Udyota*. It is said to be associated with the sage Durvāsā. Despite that this Āgama appears at some places to lean towards dualistic thought, the Śaivācarya explain the text in such way that it also appears to support the Trika philosophical ideas. In Kṣemarāja's elaborate commentary, the *Udyota*, he has attempted to interpret the philosophy of this text in the light of non-dualistic thought.

The *Netra Tantra*, also called the *Mṛtyujit Bhaṭṭāraka* or *Amṛteśa Bhaṭṭāraka*, is a smaller text compared to the previous one, containing 22 *adhikāras* or chapters in the form of dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī, with Pārvatī as the interlocutor. It sheds light on various

topics of spiritual interest. Kṣemarāja has written a commentary, also called the *Udyota*, on this text.

Like the *Parātriṁśika*, the *Vijñānabhairava* is a part of the *Rudrayāmala Tantra*, dealing with *kriyā*, the ritual aspects of worship. A complete Śaivāgama normally is comprised of four parts: *vidyā* (the philosophical section), *caryā* (way of life), *kriyā* (rituals) and *yoga* (spiritual practices). This only text explains *kriyā*, in the form of 112 *dhāranās* or methods of concentration upon and union with the divine. The yogic practices described in the text are technically called *nistaraṅga upadeśa*, i.e. spiritual instructions leading the mind to the attainment of the 'waveless state'.

In his *Śivadṛṣṭi* (III, 13-15), Somānanda referred to the *Mataṅga* and the *Svayambhuva Tantras* and their commentaries, implying that these Tantras should also be included with the Āgamas, forming the base for the non-dualistic thought of Trika. But Kṣemarāja in his *udyota* on the *Svacchanda Tantra* has expressed the opinion that these Tantric texts taught dualistic doctrines, but that there is need to interpret them from the perspective of non-dualism.

Spanda Śāstra

The second phase in the development of the Trika school is marked by focusing attention on the ever-active divine *śakti*; this was technically called the *Spanda Śāstra* (the scripture emphasising the ever-pulsating divine *śakti*). These ideas were already nascent in the *Svacchanda Tantra* and the *Vijñāna Bhairava*, but took their concrete form with the composition of the *Spanda Sūtras*, better known as the *Spanda Kārikā*. The text attempts to elaborate the non-dualistic thought enunciated in the *Śivasūtras*, without however giving logical arguments in support of the thought. The total number of verses in this text is only ninety-two. The tradition ascribes the authorship to Vasugupta himself, but some modern scholars held that the *Spanda Kārikās* were composed by his disciple Kallaṭa (c. 855) on the basis of his master's teaching. In any case, it is sure that Kallata wrote a commentary called the *Vṛtti* on the *Kārikās*; together with

the commentary they are known as the *Spanda Sarvasva*. Three commentaries on the *Spanda Kārikās* are available: the *vivṛtti* by Rāmakaṇṭha (c. 925), the *Pradīpikā* by Utpala Vaiṣṇava (c. 10th century), and the *Nirṇaya* by Kṣemāraja. The *Spanda Sandoha* is yet another work written by Kṣemarāja to summarise the main tenets elucidated in the *Spanda Kārikā*. This work looks more to be an abridgement of his bigger work *Spanda Nirṇaya* than an altogether independent work.

Pratyabhijñā Śāstra

The Pratyabhijñā phase signifies the culmination of the development of Trika Śaivism, wherein an attempt has been made to present the Advaita Śaiva philosophies within a rational language. It marks a new form in the development of Trika Śaivism, from being a religion to a philosophical school based on rational principles. Siddha Somānanda (850 C.E.), probably a pupil of Vasugupta, is credited with introducting dialecties in enunciating the tenets of Trika Śaivism, and therefore, he is spoken of as a 'founder of logic' (*tarkasya kartā*). His only work, the *Śivadṛṣṭi*, marks the beginning of this phase in the development of Trika Śaivism.

According to an ancient tradition mentioned in the seventh and concluding *āhnika* of *Śivadṛṣṭi*, this system flourished within the oral teachings of some sages and Śaiva masters before the advent of the Kali era. With the beginning of the Kali age, this system became extinct due to an unfavourable atmosphere prevailing in the country. Lord Śiva, normally residing upon mount Kailāsa, came down to earth in the form of Śrīkaṇṭha and asked the sage Durvāsā to create a lineage to revive and protect the teachings of Pratyabhijñā. Asked by Lord Śiva himself, sage Durvāsā created a mind-born son (*mānasa putra*) named Tryambakāditya, and transmitted the secret doctrines of this system to him. Trayambakāditya left for 'the sky' after obtaining perfection (*siddhatva*), but before leaving the earth in this manner he also produced a 'mind-born son'. In this way, fourteen generations of mind-born sons were created, one after the other, who

all left the earth in this same way. The fifteenth son in the succession of mind-born sons was Saṅgamāditya, who remained on earth. His son and grandson were Varśāditya and Aruṇāditya. Siddha Somānanda traces his lineage of *siddhas* to sage Durvāsā. It is for this reason that the *Pratyabhijñā Śāstra* is sometimes is called the philosophy of the *siddhas*.

The text of the *Śivadṛṣṭi* is comprised of seven *āhnikas* containing 307 verses in which the tenets of this *śāstra* have been critically examined in the traditional manner, with the refutation of their opponents' views and in the establishment of the theses of the *śāstra*. Somānanda wrote a *vṛtti* (commentary in prose) which is only partially available.

Somānanda's disciple Utpaladeva (ca. 970 C.E.) wrote *Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*, a text comprised of four *adhikāras* or chapters, subdivided to elaborately examine the tenets of this *śāstra* from a rational view. The total number of verses in the text is 190. Utpaladeva focused his attention upon the doctrine of recognition (*pratyabhijñā*), which constitutes the central doctrine of this *śāstra*. The word *pratyabhijñā* literally means recognition, in spontaneously realizing one's true nature once again. No *upāyas* (a means for attaining the ultimate goal i.e. *śivatva*) have been prescribed in this *śāstra*. Recognition of one's divine nature could happen to an individual *sādhaka* any moment, as it is not dependent on anything else, nor has it any precondition. This doctrine appears to be in perfect consonance with the doctrine of divine freedom (*svātantrya*), which is the cardinal doctrine of Trika Śaivism. The moment recognition dawns, one not only becomes instantaneously divine, but one also realizes that one was already divine. This cardinal doctrine created a stir in spiritual circles, and revolutionized philosophical thought in India. Trika Śaivism therefore came to be known as *Pratyabhijñā Śāstra*. In his *Sarvadarśana saṁgraha*, Mādhavācārya identified *Trika Śāstra* as *Pratyabhijñā Śāstra*, and gave a summary of its tenets.

We come across three commentaries written on the text of *Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*, as well as a commentary called the *Vṛtti* by

Somānanda. These others are called the *Vimarśinī* and *Vivṛtti Vimarśinī*, both by Abhinavagupta, a disciple of Utpaladeva; the former is shorter, while the latter is a more elaborated commentary. Abhinavagupta had the habit of writing commentaries in both detailed as well as in a shorter form; we notice this trait of his a number of times. Bhāskara wrote a commentary called the *Bhāskarī Ṭīkā* on Abhinavagupta's *Pratyabhijñā Vimarśinī*.

Abhinavagupta (993-1015 C.E.) was probably the greatest genius produced by this school of thought, as well as a prolific writer who wrote as many as sixteen works expounding the philosophy of this system. His *magnum opus,* however, is the *Tantrāloka* (lit. 'The Light on the philosophy of Śaiva Tantras') published in 12 volumes. It is a veritable encyclopaedia of this school, and as such forms a class by itself. Jayaratha (12th century), a disciple of Kṣemarāja who was himself a disciple of Abhinavagupta, wrote a lucid and elaborate commentary on it called the *Viveka*. The voluminous text of the *Tantrāloka* is comprised of 37 *āhnikas* discussing a variety of topics, both metaphysical and related to *sādhanā*. Abhinavagupta has discussed in great detail the nature of *guru*, divine grace (*śaktipāta*), various *upāyas* (means for achieving the highest goal in life) and other affiliated subjects. Jayaratha has enriched his commentary with quotations from as many as three hundred Tantric texts, many of them now lost.

Abhinavagupta summarized the contents of the *Tantrāloka* in his *Tantrasāra* in 22 *āhnikas*, discussing the same topics as he did in the *Tantrāloka*. It is also a *sādhanā*-oriented philosophical treatise.

His other work that became very popular in Kashmir is the *Paramārthasāra*. Though this text is looked upon as a compendium of the philosophy of Trika Śaivism, it is based on an older work called the *Ādhāra Kārikā*, by Śeṣa Muni. It is in fact a very skillfully executed adaptation of this *Ādhāra Kārikā*. Abhinavagupta had frankly acknowledged this fact, saying that he was to explain the essence of *Ādhāra Kārikā* in the light of *Śaiva Śāsana*. The original *Ādhāra Kārikā* was probably a Vaiṣṇava text. Noticing its popularity among

the masses in Kashmir (due to the prevalence of the Pāñcarātras before the rise of Śaivism), he decided to undertake this task of adaptation.

Abhinavagupta also wrote many devotional poems and short verses, such as the *Paramārtha Dvādaśikā*, the *Paramārtha Carcā* and the *Anubhava Nivedanam*, which become popular due to both their brevity and their depth in explaining many different facets of the philosophy of this Trika School.

Abhinavagupta's disciple Kṣemarāja was mainly a commentator who wrote lucid and informative commentaries on texts, ranging from the Āgamas to philosophical texts like the *Spandakārikā*. His only independent work, the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* ('The Heart of the doctrine of Recognition'), found him a place in the galaxy of the exponents of Trika Śaivism. This work is comprised of twenty *sūtra*s together with the author's own commentary. It occupies a parallel place in this school as does Sadānanda's *Vedāntasāra* in the Advaita Vedānta of Śāṅkara. Kṣemarāja stated that he wrote this book for those who do not possess a sufficiently refined intellect to study difficult works full of dialectics, yet who nevertheless aspire to *samāvaśa* (union with the divine).

Abhinavagupta's most important contribution in enriching the philosophy of Trika Śaivism lies in his masterful integration of Śaiva thought with the ideas of the Kaula and Krama schools, which were also prevalent in Kashmir at that time. He has plainly confessed his role as a master syncretist, comparing himself to a black bee (*bhramara*). Just as a bee collects honey from a variety of flowers, each with a distinctive smell and taste, yet then blends them together to produce a unique honey, pleasing in its taste and invigorating when eaten, in the same way has he borrowed spiritual ideas from various spiritual traditions — Śākta, Kaula, Krama — to blend them with Trika philosophy to make the most perfect of thought currents, both in depth and in content.

The Kaula tradition is a Śākta one, with its origin in the north-eastern part of India, with Kāmākhyā as one of its principal seats. Matsyendranātha, who is known in Kashmir as Macchanda Vibhu, is

the founder of one of the schools called Yoginī Kaula; this stream entered Kashmir around the fifth century. One of Abhinavagupta's spiritual teachers, Śambhunātha, belonged to this lineage (as mentioned by Abhinavagupta in the *Tantrāloka*). The Kaula masters instruct the *sādhakas* that one should live in the all-pervasive consciousness (*caitanya*) which is the core of their being. The mode of *sādhanā* prescribed by the Kaulas consists in a process of ascent and descent to realize one's true nature as simultaneously all-pervasive and immanent. It prescribes the way to realize the presence of the highest being, Śiva, from the gross matter at the level of *pṛthvītattva* to the highest level of Śiva *tattva*. In this way, the *sādhaka* tries to integrate everything into the one non-dual *parama* Śiva.

The Krama tradition existed at the beginning of the Kali era. It was probably introduced in Kashmir by the sage Durvāsā in the fifth century C.E. As it became a somewhat weak tradition over the course of time, it was reintroduced in Kashmir in the 7th century by Eraknāth, also known as Śivānandanātha. He had three disciples to carry his thoughts, all women: Keyūravatī, Madanikā and Kalyanika. After them came a succession of teachers, each bearing forward the Krama tradition.

The distinguishing feature of this tradition, both in theory and practice, is its stress on succession (*krama*): step-by-step progress in the path of *sādhanā* making spiritual realization free from succession, free from time and space. It therefore focused its attention on the concepts of time and space, as they govern one's elevation to higher levels of consciousness. In this, it differs fundamentally from the Kaula and Pratyabhijñā approach to spiritual realization, since these stress going beyond time and space. The Śiva nature in a *sādhaka* exists beyond time and space.

The Krama tradition associates the twelve Kālīs with the *śaktopaya*, representing twelve moments in the realization of one's true Śiva nature. These have been described in the context of *sādhanā* as well as the with regards to manner in which one realizes one's Śiva nature.

Abhinavagupta's main contribution has been integrating the diverse religious thought currents into one integral thought-Truth (*akhaṇḍa satya*), making it both powerful and popular among the people.

BOOK TWO : METAPHYSICAL

~Chapter II~

Nature of the Supreme Reality

1. Introductory remarks

Indian philosophy, called *darśana*, is based on the direct experience of the supreme truth by spiritual seekers. However, their vision of the truth varies from one seeker to the other, due to the variable clarity of the vision they attain through their pursuit of spiritual discipline, as well as the development of their inner capacity to comprehend this Truth. When they articulate their experience of the truth in words, differences appear in their descriptions due to understandable distortions which emerge during the process of the transformation of experience into knowledge by a limited intellect.[1] To illustrate, some schools of *darśana* perceive the ultimate reality in manifold forms, with each component element of reality having its own eternal and independent existence. Such schools are called pluralistic schools. The Vaiśeṣika, the Nyāya and the Pūrva Mimāṁsā are known as pluralistic schools. The Sāṁkhya and the Pātañjala Yoga systems, after analyzing the components of worldly phenomena, have come to the conclusion that reality consists of two distinct types of ontological realities: the sentient principle of consciousness called the *puruṣa*, and the insentient reality, named *prakṛti*, the principle of matter — both existing eternally and independently, side by side. Accordingly, their systems of philosophical thought are called dual-

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[1] Cf. *Ekaṁ sadviprā bahudhā vadanti. Ṛgveda* I.164.46.

istic schools. There are some schools which perceive the ultimate reality as one without any second; such schools are known as the non-dualistic schools or Advaita schools. The 'orthodox' non-dualistic schools that emerged after the Upaniṣads claim that non-dualism is the purport of the teachings of the Upaniṣads; therefore, they claim a close affinity to them. If we take a bird's eye view of the entire range of Indian philosophical thought with a historical perspective, we notice a progressive reductionistic trend prevailing therein, indicating some kind of conceptual development in the field of metaphysical thought.

2. Concept of non-dualism (*advaita*): different views

It has been mentioned in the previous section that the metaphysical theory of non-dualism represents the acme of the development of Indian philosophical thought. Broadly speaking, there are four distinct projections of the concept of non-dualism made by different schools of Indian philosophical thought over different epochs. Looking from the historical perspective, the first and earliest projection of the theory of non-dualism was made by the Mahāyāna Buddhists, represented by the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika schools. They advocated non-dualism based on the negation or denial of the existence of the multiplicity of the world, on the ground that it is merely a false superimposition on the substratum, a non-dual stream of consciousness (*vijñānasantāna*) which is incapable of being comprehended or described in positive or negative terms, or both; this was technically called *śūnya*. Since momentariness is one of the cardinal doctrines in the Buddhist philosophy, everything — including the underlying substratum, consciousness — is momentary, or in a state of flux. The multiplicity of the world, which also is constantly undergoing mutation, is merely the superimposition upon the substratum of consciousness in a state of flux. Since our senses, the instruments for cognition, are also undergoing change, we are able to apprehend the flux neither within the subject nor within the object. We wrongly imagine them to be constant and existent, which is just

a delusion of our brain. The Buddhists are labelled 'subjective idealists' for denying the existence of any external world outside of and independent from the percipient subjects' experience. Thus the doctrine of non-dualism (*advaitavāda*) projected by them appears to be a misnomer, only a pseudo-non-dualism. The non-dualism they proposed is therefore in a class by itself.

Gauḍapāda, the celebrated author of the *Āgamaprakaraṇa* (a commentary on the *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad*) and the founder of a distinctive school of Vedānta which later came to be known as 'Advaita Vedānta', proposed an apparently similar doctrine of non-dualism. But it cannot be described as a 'pseudo-non-dualism' because the non-dual reality he described which serves as the substratum for the superimposition of the multiplicity of the world is *not* in a state of perennial flux; it is existent as the immutable, eternally existent Reality. The multiplicity normally experienced by us on the mundane plane is unreal, looking from the *advaitic* point of view. It is negated upon our realization of the true nature of reality as 'One without any second'.

The description of pure non-dualism as given by Gauḍapāda developed further; credit for this goes to Ādi Śaṅkarācārya (788-820 C.E.), grand-disciple of Gauḍapāda, due to his lucid commentaries on works like the principal ancient Upaniṣads and the *Brahmasūtra*. His expression of the idea of this second kind of non-dualism is also based on the negation of the existence of the phenomenal multiplicity within ultimate reality, the Brahman, at the trans-empirical level of existence. By denying the existence of any multiplicity within the Brahman, the Advaita Vedānta school of Śaṅkara appears to take a narrow view of the ultimate Reality, the Brahman. Sri Aurobindo, the sage of modern India, vehemently criticizes Śaṅkara for his adopting this 'renunciatory outlook'. The real reason, however, for Śaṅkara adopting a 'renunciatory outlook' was his firm belief that the non-dual Brahman can only be reached through the negation of the existence of everything else (*neti neti*) that is not Brahman. The Brahman alone exists; nothing else has any existence as the immutable Reality.

The Advaita Śaivism of Kashmir, popularly known as Kashmir Śaivism, projects a third kind of non-dualism (*advaita*) based on the affirmation of the existence of everything within the One. In other words, the concept of non-dualism postulated in its school is the integration of everything with the eternally existent Reality, technically called the *saṁvid* or *anuttara cit* (transcendent consciousness). Unlike the Buddhists and the Śānkara Vedāntins who are regarded as 'idealists', the Kashmir Śaivites are realists, as they admit the existence of both the immutable One and its 'becoming' as the world. They seem to make this simultaneous affirmation of both everything and the One possible, taking an integral view of reality (*akhaṇḍa dṛṣṭi*), and enlarging the scope of non-dualism (*advaita*), as it were, making it all-embracing and all-inclusive. In other words, they conceive the ultimate Reality to be the integral one (*akhaṇḍa*) in which the infinite multiplicity and all mutual differences 'dissolve', as it were, or lose their distinct identity. All contradictions arise and exist on the level of finite intellect; they resolve automatically once the level of finite existence is transcended to enter into the realm of the infinite pure consciousness. As a matter of fact, One and many, the absolute (*anuttara*) and the universal (*viśvatmaka*), constitute the two facets of the 'fullness nature' (*paripūrṇasvarūpa*) of the ultimate reality, *saṁvid*.

As the metaphysical thought propagated by Advaita Śaivism leans heavily towards the practice of spiritual discipline (*sādhanā*), it introduces theism into its metaphysical thought, bringing it closer to the lives of spiritual seekers by making the philosophy of this school meaningful to them. They hold that the ultimate reality is not only an abstract metaphysical concept, but that it also has being or existence as the supreme Lord, endowed with unrestricted power (*śakti*) inalienable from His divine nature. It is He who, exercising His power of divine freedom, manifests Himself of His own volition (*svecchāyā*) as the world of multiplicity. He is real, and His self-manifestation as the world is also equally real — the two representing two facets of His nature, the transcendent and the immanent. In this

way, the Advaita Śaivites advocate an integral philosophy of non-dualism (*akhaṇḍādvaita*), based on the affirmation of everything within the supreme reality.

The schools of Vedānta which are inclined towards theism constitute the fourth group of advocates of the philosophy of non-dualism. These schools, though realistic in their outlook, hold different ideas about non-dualism than that of the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir. The non-dualist concepts they propagate are not 'pure', as they are mixed with theistic ideas. The reason for this 'conceptual adulteration' of non-dualism with theism can be traced back to the influence of Vaisṇava thought, which was popularized by the Bhāgavata tradition which had influenced the founders of these schools of theistic Vedānta. Vaiṣṇava thought was dominant during the period of the origin of the Vedānta schools started by Rāmānuja and Vallabha.

Rāmānuja (12th century) propagated the doctrine of non-dualism, technically called 'qualified non-dualism' (*viśiṣṭādvaitavāda*). Unlike the Śāṅkara Vedāntin, Rāmānuja was a realist who admitted the existence of all within the unity of the One, the non-dual Reality which he calls *saguṇa brahman* (the qualified Brahman), or *Īśvara* (God).

Rāmānuja and his followers conceive the ultimate reality to be the fusion of the triad *cit*, *acit* and *Īśvara*. According to them, *cit* means limited beings (*jīva*), *acit* signifies *prakṛti* or *māyā*, the principle of insentient material power, and *Īśvara* is the unifying principle. This is because He is conceived as the substratum (*āśraya*) of both the *cit* or limited beings and of *acit*, the principle of material power. Since *Īśvara* or the *saguṇa brahman* permeates throughout the world of both consciousness or sentience (*cit*) and of matter (*acit*), He is metaphorically spoken of as the soul (*ātmā*), while the world of consciousness and of matter constitutes His corporeal body (*śarīra*). *Īśvara* is said to be endowed with infinite knowledge and infinite bliss, hence he is said to be the repository of all good qualities. Rāmānuja dismisses the idea of an attribute-less *brahman* as a 'utopian'

ideal. *Īśvara* is the creator, the preserver and the destroyer of the manifested world. His concept of the ultimate reality as the *saguṇa brahman* appears to be inspired by the description occurring in the *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* (I, 12).[2] It appears that Rāmānuja imported the concept of *saguṇa brahman* or *Īśvara*, together with that of *cit* or limited beings as being non-different from Him in essence, to introduce devotion or *bhakti* into the philosophy of this school. He saw *bhakti* or devotion to be a means of realizing one's essential non-difference with the ultimate reality, the *saguṇa brahman* or *Īśvara* (God).

Vallabhācārya (15th century) propagated the philosophy of *Śuddhādvaita* (pure non-dualism). He too was influenced by the Vaiṣṇavism preached by the Bhāgavata tradition. Like Rāmānuja, he also introduces theistic strains into his concept of the *brahman* as the non-dual reality. According to him, the *brahman* is the repository of all attributes, and yet, He Himself is free from all attributes — He is *nirguṇa* (without attribute). He created the world, accomplished with the help of His *śakti*, *māyā śakti*, out of His free will as a part of His divine play (*līlā*). The world, being His own creation, is as real as He himself is. The fact that both He and His creation really exist does not affect His non-dual character in the least. In fact, Vallabhācārya talks about three forms in which the *brahman* exists simultaneously and is seen by His devotees as such. The three forms are the supreme *brahman* (*para brahman*), the immutable *brahman* (*akṣara brahman*) and the *brahman* as the world, respectively symbolizing His *adhi-daivika* (lit. 'relating to a *gopi*') form as well as His *ādhyātmika* form (lit. 'relating to the spirit or self'). Vallabhācārya is a realist, hence he tries to integrate the three different forms of the *brahman* perceived by His devotees. In this way, Vallabha's idea of *nirguṇa brahman* as the sole reality appears to be an amalgam of these three forms of the *brahman*.

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[2] *Op. cit. Etaj jñeyaṁ nityamevātma sansthaṁ, nataḥ paraṁ veditavyaṁ hi kircit | bhoktā bhogyaṁ preritāraṁ ca matva, sarvaṁ proktan trividhaṁ brahmetat.*

3. Nature of the supreme reality in Advaita Śaiva thought

As has already been stated, the Advaita Śaivites of Kashmir are staunch advocates of the integral kind of non-dualism, hence they believe in the existence of one reality which they call by various names, such as *Parāsaṁvid* (the supreme experiencing principle), *Caitanya*, *Ātman* (the universal self), *Anuttara* (the absolute), *Parameśvara* (the supreme Lord), the *parama Śiva*, and so on. The ultimate reality is held to be of the nature of pure consciousness (*caitanya*) which, by its very nature, is eternal, immutable and infinite. Though the *parāsaṁvid* is regarded as eternal and immutable, it is held to underlie all creation as the innermost core of being, in all that exists in the world, both individually and collectively. Hence, in that all-pervasive aspect, it is called the *ātman*, the *caitanya*.

At the same time, the *parāsaṁvid* is one, individible (*akhaṇḍa*) and infinite (*ananta*), hence neither is it exhausted by its manifestation in diverse forms in the multiplicity of the world — both in the form of infinite number of subjects (*pramātā*) and as the insentient objects of cognition (*prameya*) — nor is it limited or conditioned by space (*deśa*), time (*kāla*) or form (*rūpa*). It transcends all its manifestation as the world, therefore in that all-transcending form it is called the *parāsaṁvid*, the *anuttara* (the transcendent absolute).

It has been mentioned before that the *parāsaṁvid* or *caitanya* is endowed with unrestricted *śakti*, technically called the *svātantrya śakti* (the power of divine freedom) which functions while being inseparably fused with Him, revealing His divine nature as transcendent being, the supreme Lord. Sometimes (i.e. during a creative phase), His power of divine freedom functions somewhat distinctly from Him (the supreme Lord), as it were, when His immanent form as the world manifestation is revealed. It is held by the Advaita Śaivites that this twofold manifestation of His nature as both the supreme Lord (transcendent being) as well as the immanent reality (the world manifestation) are not mutually exclusive, with one negating the other, but rather are concurrent and complimentary, indicating His fullness and integral nature (*paripūrṇa akhaṇḍa svarūpa*).

4. Nature of *caitanya* or consciousness — the Advaita Śaiva view

A question naturally arises in discerning minds, regarding on which grounds Advaita Śaivism regarded the *parāsaṁvit* or *caitanya*, the sole non-dual reality, simultaneously as the all-pervading reality, the universal consciousness and the transcendent absolute (i.e. *anuttara*). In his *Pratyabhijñāhṛidayam*, Kṣemarāja mentions this as the characteristic feature of their conception of the ultimate reality. The reason for regarding the ultimate both as all-pervading and transcendent reality can be found in their concept of *caitanya*, which is unique in Indian philosophy.

Before we examine the nature of *caitanya* proposed by the Advaita Śaivites, it would perhaps be useful if, by way of contrast, we briefly survey the evolution of the concept as it was delineated by the dualist Sāṁkhya-Yoga, the non-dualist Mādhyamika and Yogācāra Buddhists, and the non-dualist Śāṅkara Vedāntins. The dualist schools of Sāṁkhya and Pātañjala Yoga give *caitanya* the status of an independent ontological entity, understanding its nature as pure existence (*sat*) and illumination (*cit* or *prakāśa*) that always shines. The existence-nature of *caitanya* is indicative of its immutable character, while its illumination-nature is said to play an important role in the cognitive process, by illuminating the images of objects reflected within the intellect and thereby making the subject, *caitanya*, aware of them. The Buddhists conceive the *caitanya* as an ever-flowing stream upon which the ideas of 'subject' and 'worldly phenomena' produced by past impressions are superimposed and cognized. Holding everything as momentary, they conceive the *caitanya* as being in a state of eternal flux. The Buddhists, in this way, reduce *caitanya* to subject-less and object-less flowing stream of consciousness upon which the notion of subject-object 'float', produced by residual impressions of past experience.

The Śāṅkara Vedāntins conceptualise *caitanya* as all-pervasive reality, the non-dual *brahman*. They consider the nature of *caitanya* from two standpoints, from that of the phenomenal world as well as from that of trans-empirical non-dual reality. Looking from the point

of view of the phenomenal world, *caitanya*, the non-dual reality, one without a second, is the all-pervasive substratum upon which the multiplicity of the world produced by beginningless cosmic ignorance has been superimposed under the influence of this same ignorance. Looking from the trans-empirical standpoint, *caitanya* is the embodiment of pure existence (*sat*), pure knowledge (*cit*) and pure bliss (*ānanda*). This description of *caitanya* is technically known as the primary description (*svarūpalakṣaṇa*) while the delineation of *caitanya* as the all-pervasive substratum of the worldly phenomena is the secondary definition (*taṭastha lakṣaṇa*), valid only so long as the appearance of the worldly phenomena persists.

Against this background of the evolution of the concept of *caitanya* conceived by the different schools of Indian philosophical thought (presented here in a kind of hierarchical order), let us now focus our attention on the Advaita Śaiva view of the nature of *caitanya* — which appears to answer many questions arising in our minds on its relation with the world phenomena as both the non-dual all-pervasive *caitanya* as well as the manifold world, looked upon as real.

Adopting an altogether different paradigm for their description of the nature of *caitanya* as compared to that of other schools of Indian philosophy, the Advaita Śaivites describe *caitanya* as being of the nature of *prakāśa* (illumination) and *vimarśa* — *prakāśa* representing the illumination that always shines as the self-effulgent light (*sphurat prakāśa*), and *vimarśa* symbolizing that unique power or capacity innate in the *caitanya* which enables it to reveal itself to itself in the absence of any second. *Prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, pure illumination and the *śakti* innate in it for self-revelation, constitute the twin aspects of the nature of *caitanya*. They exist inseparably fused together (*yuganaddha*), constituting the supreme reality's integral nature (*akhaṇḍa svarūpa*), as it were. It is for this reason that the Advaita Śaiva texts describe the supreme reality as *prakāśa-vimarśa māyā*. *Prakāśa*, pure illumination, represents the static aspect of *caitanya* which is given the name Śiva, while the power of self-revelation innate within it is called *vimarśa śakti*, symbolizing the

ever-pulsating dynamic aspect which is known as *śakti*. It is said that supreme reality or *caitanya* represents the perfect equilibrium of the static and the dynamic, i.e. Śiva and Śakti; it is thereby called *parama* Śiva. It may be mentioned here that the Advaita Śaivites use the name *parama* Śiva to signify not only a theistic deity but also a metaphysical reality, the supreme reality who occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of creation. Nothing exists beyond this (*anuttara*).

Opponents, such as the pluralist Naiyāyikas, might urge that the very description of *caitanya* as a fusion of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* — representing two diametrically opposite static and dynamic paradigms — implies the existence of two components, mutually opposite in nature but held together within the *caitanya* by some kind of relationship. One possible relationship could be that of possessor and possessed — *prakāśa* (illumination) being possessor, and *vimarśa śakti* (the power of self-revelation) being innate within *prakāśa* as something possessed. The Advaita Śaivites point out that this conclusion by the pluralists is erroneous and logically unwarranted. They argue that we sometimes talk about *śakti* and the possessor or substratum of *śakti* as if they were two distinct entities, and also distinguish *śakti* from the possessor of *śakti* on the basis of our distorted perception at the mundane level. But this distinction, they point out, is only the conceptual (*vaikalpika*) or logical distinction imagined by us to understand their nature distinctly.

Our intellect is a limited instrument for cognition; it generally grasps its objects, part by part, through an analytic process. It is normally incapable of looking at an object with an integral vision (*akhaṇḍa dṛṣṭi*). The Advaita Śaivites stress the need to develop an integral vision in order to obtain the knowledge of the totality of the objects of cognition. They explain this by citing a concrete example: they declare that fire (*agni*) and its power of burning (*dahikāsakti*) are not two independent entities which are cognized separately, though the pluralist Naiyāyikas regard them as distinct categories (*padārthas*), seeing them from an analytic viewpoint. It is well known that the

Naiyāyikas hold that the substratum 'fire' is different from its attribute, the power of burning, which is said to inhere within the substratum through a relation of inherence (*samavāya*), and therefore is perceived by us as inseparable — though as a matter of fact, it is not so. The Advaita Śaivites point out that when we mention fire and its power of burning separately, we do it to realize its distinction from the other powers of fire (e.g. cooking, providing light) known from the point of view afforded by its practical use in our daily life. It is not a *real* distinction because the two — fire and its power of burning — cannot be isolated. The Advaita Śaivites always insist on developing one's integral vision, as the knowledge obtained through that vision alone is real.

It may be mentioned here that Advaita Śaivism adds a new dimension to the concept of *caitanya*, holding it to be of the nature of self-effulgent illumination (*svayamprakāśa*) as well as the nature of 'being' or existence (*sat*). Sāṁkhya and Pātañjala Yoga, Advaita Vedānta and the like all only delineate *caitanya* as pure existence (*sat*) in order to emphasize its immutable character. The Advaita Śaivism explains the 'being' nature of *caitanya* somewhat differently, holding 'illumination' to be equivalent to 'existence'. For example, according to the Advaita Śaivites, all existent things (*sat*) are of the nature of illumination (*prakāśa*) because they are either self-revealed (*prakāśita*) or capable of being revealed (*prakāśya*). It other words, the 'being' nature is coeval with a self-revelatory character, either independently or with the help of the light of *caitanya*. All sentient subjects (*pramātā*) are self-conscious or self-revealed, while all insentient objects of knowledge (*prameya*) are capable of being revealed. The world manifestation comprises only these two categories of things, both of the nature of *caitanya*, which is the sole reality. The characteristic of *prakāśa* is the common denominator among all 'existent' things in the world. No non-existent or imaginary thing possesses illumination (*prakāśa*) as its characteristic.[3]

[3] *Iha acetitasya kasyāpi sattvābhavāt, citi kriyā sarvasāmānya rūpā. Śiva Sūtra Vimarśinī, Su. 1.*

As a matter of fact, the Advaita Śaivite's interpretation of the illuminative nature of *caitanya* as a synonym of 'being' in all existent things simplifies their task of integrating insentient material creation with sentient beings, as both are existent and real, as well as both partaking in the *prakāśa* nature of *caitanya*. This is convincingly demonstrated by Utpaladeva in his *Ajaḍapramātrisiddhi*.[4] He points out that the two components of worldly manifestation — the sentient subject and insentient objects — are identical in essence, as both of them are of the nature of *caitanya*, or of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*. However, they are cognized by us as opposite in form because both these aspects (that is, of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*) are manifest in sentient subjects, making them self-conscious and self-aware, whereas only the *prakāśa* aspect of *caitanya* is manifest in the insentient or material object, as the *vimarśa* aspect lies latent (*antarlīna*) within them.[5] Insentient objects therefore need the light of *caitanya* for their revelation within the intellect of percipient subjects.

Let us now turn our attention to the nature of *vimarśa śakti*, which is introduced for the first time by the Advaita Śaivites in their description of the nature of *caitanya*. Let us explore the reason why they regard *vimarśa* as an inseparable aspect of *caitanya*'s nature, and also examine its implication in their metaphysical framework.

As has already been observed, in the philosophy of Advaita Śaivism, *caitanya* is not only self-effulgent illumination that always shines as *prakāśa*, it also innately possesses the capacity for self-revelation. The power of self-revelation technically called *vimarśa śakti* enables all sentient subjects to be self-conscious or self-aware (*aham iti*).[6] Self-consciousness or self-awareness is an essential characteristic of every sentient being, which is due to the activity of the manifest *vimarśa śakti* within them. Unlike Śaṅkara's Advaita

[4] *Op. cit.*, verse 12 Com.

[5] *Ibid*, verse 13.

[6] *Ibid*, verse 15 com.

Vedāntins, the Advaita Śaivites do not see *caitanya* to be merely of the nature of ever-shining all-pervasive illumination, but rather as an illumination endowed with a self-revealing power or *vimarśa*, by virtue of which it is also self-aware.

5. The nature of *śakti*

It has been stated before that the divine *śakti* constitutes an integral aspect of *caitanya*'s nature that pulsates or operates ceaselessly, inseparably fused within it, bringing out its nature as the supreme Lord (*parameśvara*) as well as (at some times) revealing its immanent nature as the world. For that reason, *caitanya* is often mentioned in the texts on Kashmir Śaivism as *citi* (consciousness power).

In his *Parāpraveśika* Kṣemarāja listed a number of epithets, all synonyms denoting Śakti, which throw light on Her nature.[7]

The divine *śakti* has been called *sāra*, the essence of the supreme Lord, and also His heart (*hṛdaya*) (*hṛdayaṁ paramesituḥ*). The epithet *sāra* indicates that one cannot conceive of the supreme Lord without *śakti*, even as a logical abstraction. The Advaita Śaiva writers go to the length of suggesting that, devoid of *śakti*, the supreme Lord Śiva would be reduced to a lifeless corpse (*śava*). They clarify that the vowel 'i' in the Sanskrit word 'Śiva' actually stands for the life-force within Him. The description of Śakti as the heart (*hṛdaya*) of the Lord also lends support to the view that She (*śakti*) constitutes the life-supporting principle of the Lord.

The epithet *ūrmi* (lit. waves), used by Śaiva writers to signify the *śakti* of the supreme Lord is suggestive of Her ceaselessly functioning within Him. As a matter of fact, the use of this epithet lends a metaphorical description of *śakti* which epitomizes the ever-active principle of dynamism of the Lord. Just as waves are seen to rise and fall on the surface of ocean water continuously without any pause, in

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[7] Cf. *Citiḥ svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ* Pr. Itd Sū 1. *Parāśaktirupā citi bhagavati ... asyām prasarantyāṁ jagadunmiati vyavatiṣṭhate ba nivṛtta prasaryām ca nimiṣati*. Com. on the above *sūtra*.

the same way is *śakti* seen to operate ceaselessly within the supreme Lord to manifest His divine glory (*aiśvarya*) in two forms: as an omnipotent Lord as well as the universe itself (which is also an expression of His glory). It may be mentioned here that the Advaita Śaiva texts describe the Lord's self-manifestation as the universe as His self-expansion (*svaśaktisphāra*), viewed from His point of view.[8] The self-awareness is the distinguishing characteristic of all sentient beings, which owes its existence to the function of *vimarśa śakti* fused with the illuminating nature of the *caitanya*. The self-awareness takes the form of 'I-experience' (*ahamiti*) which, according to Advaita Śaivism, is totally different in nature from the 'ego-experience' (*ahaṁkāra*). The ego experience has its seat in the *antaḥkaraṇa* (in the intellect), and therefore it is held to be conceptual (*vaikalpika*); the 'I-experience' (*aham-bodha*) is 'spiritual' in essence, and is located in the level beyond the intellect, at a 'supramental' level, and therefore it is said to be non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) in nature.[9] We shall discuss these natures later.

As mentioned before, the Advaita Śaiva texts use *saṁvid* as a synonym of *caitanya* on account of *caitanya*'s nature of self-awareness. It may be mentioned here that the description of *caitanya* as the self-awareness and self-consciousness known in all sentient subjects (as well as the use of the word *saṁvid* as an equivalent to *caitanya*) strikes one as similar to the description of the *cit* (pure knowledge) nature of the self that is often cited by the Upaniṣads and in the texts of Śaṅkara's Vedānta. This point will be discussed later, when the supreme Lord's relation with His self-manifestation as the world is explained.

The use of the epithet *urmi* (lit. waves) for signifying the ever-active *śakti* of the Lord has another implication as well. It is common knowledge that the surface of water in an ocean appears to be always ruffled and turbulent, but beneath the turbulence lies calm and placid

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

[9] Cf. Pr. *sūtra* 3, Com.

water; similarly, beneath the ceaseless activity of Śakti exists an actionless substratum in the form of Śiva, constituting the locus for the activity of *śakti*.

Spanda (lit. vibration or pulsation) is another epithet frequently used to describe the nature of *śakti*, and it is pregnant with deeper implications. This epithet has frequently been used in the *Spanda Kārikā*, a well-known text by Kallaṭa, disciple of the great Vasugupta, the founder of Advaita Śaiva thought. Historians say that the word '*spanda*' denotes a phase in the development of philosophical thought of this school in Kashmir (a key text of which was even called the *Spanda Śāstra*); it is also used in a technical sense. The divine *śakti* is described as *spanda* on account of her ceaseless activity in the bosom of the Lord as 'a flutter of energy' infusing 'life' into Him (as it were), making Him active. The vibration or pulsation of the divine *śakti* has been explained metaphorically in one text as a series of 'contractions and expansions' (*saṅkoca-prasāra*) of *śakti* without any pause. It may be pointed out in this context that this contraction and expansion does not involve any movement explicable in spatial terms; it can be likened to an act of 'throbbing', which is also an act which consists of contraction and expansion. It also bears resemblance to the kinetic energy contained within an atom of physical matter, under whose influence the sub-particles orbit around the atom's nucleus at a tremendous speed. The sub-particles are too subtle to be seen by the naked eye, but their existence is proved by the results they produce. The divine energy remains locked within the atom.

The divine *śakti* — while ceaselessly functioning, being inseparably fused with the supreme Lord and thereby revealing His divine glory (*aiśvarya*) — has infinite modes of expression which can be subsumed under five principal categories,[10] which are known as *cit-śakti* (consciousness-force), *ānandaśakti* (power as bliss), *icchāśakti* (power as will), *jñānaśakti* (power as knowledge) and *kriyāśakti*,

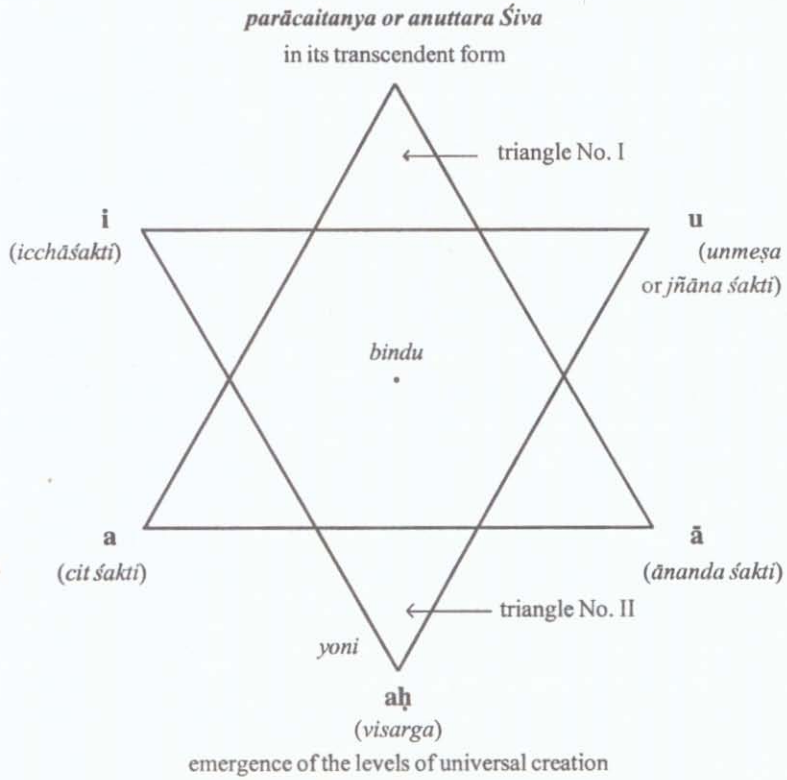
[10] Cf. *Tantrasāra*, Introductory section, p. 21.

arranged in order of their intrisciality. It is held that the *cid* and *ānanda śaktis* function to bring out the divine glory of the supreme Lord as transcendent being, while the activity of *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā śaktis* play crucial roles in revealing the supreme Lord's divine glory in the form of the world-manifestation. It must be mentioned here that all the five modes of *śakti* operate simultaneously and in unison to manifest the glory of the Lord.

Some Śaiva and Śākta texts explain the activity of different modes of the supreme Lord's divine *śaktis* with the help of the diagram of two triangles juxtaposed one over the other, with their vertices facing upwards and downwards respectively. The upward-pointing triangle is called the *urdhvatrikoṇa*, and symbolizes the supreme Lord in His transcendent form: *anuttara Śiva*, the highest *tattva*, occupies the apex position, while His *cid* and *ānanda śaktis* are said to exist and operate respectively from the left and right corners of the base of the triangle, to bring out His transcendent nature. The second triangle, called the *adhaḥtrikoṇa*, its vertex pointing downwards, symbolizes the group of three *śaktis*, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*, which play crucial roles in the supreme Lord's manifestation as the world. It is held that *icchā* and *jñānaśaktis* operate from the left and right corners at the top of their triangle, while *kriyā śakti* is said to operate on the downward-pointing vertex of the inverted triangle to fulfil the task of *visarga* (lit. throwing out), the emergence of the *tattvas* (different levels of existence) comprising the world creation. The two triangles placed one over the other make a six-corned figure (*ṣaṭkoṇa*) of *śaktis*,[11] considered by many spiritual seekers to be holy and auspicious, which is therefore used in certain rituals for their spiritual upliftment.

[11] *Śaktyayaḥ asamkheyā*, *ibid*, p. 21.

Diagram of the ṣaṭkoṇa
formed by six modes of the activity of the divine *śakti*



Explanatory note

Triangle No. I

This triangle in the diagram represents the *Parā Caitanya* or the *Parā Saṁvid* in transcendent form (*visvottīrṇarūpa*). The *Parā Caitanya*, also called the *Anuttara Śiva* possessing a form, is represented by the vertex in this triangle. The mode of His divine Śakti operating as the *cit śakti* — symbolised by the vowel letter '*a*' — is

shown in this diagram by the left side base angle. The divine Śakti functioning as the *ānanda-śakti* — symbolised by the vowel letter '*ā*' — is represented in the above diagram by the right side base angle.

The vowel letter '*ā*' here is held constituted by joining together of two vowel letters '*a*' and '*a*' symbolising the *Anuttara Śiva* in His self-created reduplicated forms facing each other (*abhimukha*). This act of voluntary re-duplication is considered a pre-requisite for His self-manifestation as the multiplicity of the world. Kashmiri Śaivācāryas hold that there cannot be manifestation of the multiplicity directly from the non-dual one.

Triangle No. II

This triangle shows the *Parāsaṁvid* or *Anuttara Śiva* in immanent form (*viśvātmaka svarūpa*).

The mode of His divine Śakti operating as *icchā śakti* is symbolised by the vowel letter '*i*', shown in the diagram by the left side base angle.

The mode of His divine Śakti operating as *unmeṣa* or *jñānaśakti* — symbolised by vowel letter '*u*' — is indicated in the diagram by the right side base angle. The act of *unmeṣa* (self-revelation as the multiplicity) also implies *kriyā*, therefore the *kriyā śakti* (one of the five modes of functioning of the divine Śakti) has not been shown explicitly in the diagram. In fact the *kriyā śakti* is held to be identical with '*ūrmi*', symbolised by the vowel letter '*ū*', which is said to be the resting place (*viśrānti*) for *unmeṣa*.

The inverted vertex in this triangle represents the point of 'throwing out' (*visarga*) of different levels of creation (*tattvas*), symbolised by consonant letters. The vowel letter '*ḥ*' symbolises this point, also called *yoni* (lit. the source), denoted by two vertically placed dots (:). It is said that the *yoni* serves as the 'opening' for the emergence of *tattvas*, beginning with *māyā* down to *pṛthvī*, symbolised by nine groups of consonant *tattvas*, technically called *mātṛkā varṇas*. These letters also symbolise modes of Śakti underlying the *tattvas*.

The bindu in the diagram symbolises all the creative powers (*śaktis*) compacted into a point (*ghanībhūta śakti*) in undifferentiated form, poised towards 'throwing out' of *tattvas* (*visarga*) through *yoni*. The *bindu* is represented by *anusvāra* indicated by a dot (.) over the (alphabetically) final consonant '*ha*' as in *ahaṁ*.

For details of this esoteric concept, please see the section discussing *pūrṇāhamtā* (the self reflective experience of the Supreme Being).

* * *

The *citśakti* (consciousness force or power) is the intrinsic form of the *śakti* of the supreme Lord, symbolising His power of self-revelation (*prakāśarūpata*). As it operates ceaselessly, always identified with the Lord, He therefore always shines and reveals Himself to Himself, in the absence of any second as his object on the highest plane — that is, beyond His self-manifestation as the universe. Due to the activity of *citśakti* (Consciousness power), this self-revelation of the supreme Lord is said to take the form of 'being-experience', and it produces self-experience within Him as *aham* (pure I-experience). Then the light of *caitanya* is focused on itself, as it were; there is no idea of any corresponding object to be revealed at this stage. As a consequence, the self-experience by the supreme Lord is in the form of *Aham* (I-experience), which — being full in itself (*paripūrṇa*) — is given the name *pūrṇāhaṁtā*. This self experience is non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) in nature, in the absence of *citta* or intellect, which is created much later after the unfoldment of world creation. Arising as it does in the mirror of consciousness of the supreme Lord, this experience is therefore spoken of as 'natural' (*a-kṛtrima*). It is totally different in nature from the ego-experience (*ahaṁkāra*) of a limited embodied being, as the ego-experience is 'artificial' — that is, created in the intellect and merely conceptual. We shall discuss this point later. It represents Śakti in Her most 'potential' form when She is only expressed in Her form of self-revelation.

Next in the order of intrinsicality is the *ānanda śakti* (power as Bliss) which enables the supreme Lord to experience Himself as fully satisfied (*āptakāma*), and ever at rest (*ātmaviśrānta*). This is the logical corollary of His self-experience of full-in-Himself (*paripūrṇa svabhāva*). He then does not feel any deficiency or want in Himself for which He might feel the necessity of moving out for fulfilment. The supreme Lord then is said to remain immersed in His fullness-nature due to the activity of His divine *śakti* in this form. In his *Śivadṛṣṭi* Somānanda referred to this self-experience of the supreme Lord as indicative of the perfect state in which consciousness (*caitanya*) has totally withdrawn itself (*nivṛtta cit*) from the outside in order to confine itself within its own being. The bliss experienced on that level is massive (*ghanībhūta*), symbolising its fullness-nature.

The supreme Lord's transcendent nature is revealed in this way, through the activity of the *cit* and *ānanda* modes of the divine *śakti*, which results in His staying eternally outside the manifestation of the world. The functioning of the triad of the *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā* modes of the divine *śakti* is held responsible for revealing the supreme Lord's immanent aspect of His nature — that is, His self-manifestation as the world. According to Abhinavagupta in his *Paramārthasāra*, this triad of *śaktis* is symbolically represented by the trident (*triśūla*) that the icon of Śiva is shown to hold in his right hand.[12]

The activity of *icchā śakti* (the divine power of will) marks the starting point in the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the world. It is said that the supreme Lord, by virtue of the function of *icchā śakti*, feels Himself to be supremely able, possessed of infinite capacity of forming resolve (*saṅkalpa*) as to what to do or what to create. This idea of will (*icchā*) or of forming resolve (*saṅkalpa*) on the part of the omnipotent supreme Lord has its parallel in the well-known Upaniṣadic statement "*eko'ham, bahusyam*" ("I am one, I wish to be many").

[12] See the diagram in p. 55.

The Advaita Śaiva writers speak about the close connection found in the activity of the *ānanda* and *icchā śaktis* — though they operate in the two different domains of transcendence and immanence — to bring out the divine nature of the supreme Lord. This may be explained in this way: it has been already mentioned that the supreme Lord remains always immersed in His massive bliss-nature, which indicates His fullness-nature. Sometimes, ripples arise in His great bliss-nature, caused by the vibratory (*spanda*) nature of Śakti, resulting in its 'spilling over', as it were. As a consequence of this, the bliss which was confined within the heart of the supreme Lord starts flowing out of Him, and this is called the *ucchalatā* (the act of throwing out). This causes the rise of a faint desire in Him (*icchā*) to experience the bliss outside Himself through His voluntary self-extension (*sphāra*) in the form of His self-manifestation as the world. In this faint desire to self-extend as the world, the Advaita Śaivites see the activity of *icchā śakti* in its seminal form. His *icchā* gradually grows into His resolve (*saṅkalpa*) to self-manifest as the world, through which He is said to experience divine bliss outside Himself. The Advaita Śaiva writers use a metaphor from our common experience to explain all this, which is as follows. The supreme Lord is conceived as an artist *par excellence*. Just as an artist (be he a musician, a painter or a poet) cannot contain his delight within himself, and is forced to give an expression to it by bursting into a song, by painting on a canvas or by composing a poem, in the same way the Supreme Artist pours out His experience of delight, having at first within Himself a faint desire for creation, which develops into resolve and culminates in creation.

The *jñāna śakti* (knowledge as power) represents that mode of the activity of the divine *śakti* which brings in and holds the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the object-like (*prameya kalpa*) in a conscious relationship with Himself as His own subject. No creation is possible until and unless the non-dual reality, the One without a second (*ekameva advitīyam*), first splits itself into two to manifest the two poles of subject and object. The supreme Lord accomplishes this within His self-experience, first with the help of the *icchā śakti*,

followed by that of the *jñāna śakti*. It must be remembered that there is no subject other than the supreme Lord, nor is there any object on that level other than the universe in an 'ideal' form. The two poles made to appear by the supreme Lord within His self-experience at that level are held to be universal and non-different in nature. As a matter of fact, when Advaita Śaivism talks about the two poles appearing in the supreme Lord's self-experience, as well as about the relation which then exists between them due to the activity of the *jñāna śakti*, this does not involve or even imply any suggestion of any duality in the self-experience of the Lord on that level.

Kriyā śakti (action as power) represents that mode of the activity of the divine *śakti* which enables the supreme Lord to assume any or all forms which constitute the universe with its infinite diversity. He plays an active role by becoming the universe, and participates in the manifestation of His cosmic or universal nature in a gross form.

Here we may remind ourselves that — although we have separately discussed the natures of these five principal modes of the activity of the divine *śakti* — these *śaktis* never operate in isolation, but rather function in unison to bring out the divine glory of the supreme Lord as the supreme Lord, and as the world of multiplicty.

Advaita Śaivism holds that the manifestation of the world by the supreme Lord represents the play of His consciousness-force (*cit śakti* or *citi*) which He conducts to experience delight outside Himself. All this will be discussed in the next chapter.

~Chapter III~

The Supreme Reality — Its Manifestation as the World

1. Background — Identity of the supreme reality and the supreme Lord

It has been mentioned before that the Advaita Śaiva writers from Kashmir subtly incorporate theistic ideas into their metaphysics, skillfully blending them with their abstract metaphysical thoughts in order to bridge the gulf between abstract philosophy and the practical philosophy of life. In this way, they succeed in making their philosophical thinking relevant and useful to life. They thus conceive the supreme reality, *parāsaṁvid* or *caitanya*, not merely as an abstract metaphysical concept but also as incarnate being called *Paramaśiva* (the supreme Śiva). They call Him *Parameśvara* (the highest Lord) on account of His said to be endowed with infinite powers (*śakti*), particularly that on which is called 'the power of divine freedom' (*svātantrya śakti*).[1]

2. The supreme Lord and His role in His self-manifestation as the world

By virtue of His possessing unrestricted power — the power of divine freedom — the supreme Lord is delineated as an independent agent (*svatantraḥ kartā*), capable of doing anything and everything He wants. Sometimes, He reveals Himself to Himself (in the absence of any second witness) as the supreme being, the *parama* Śiva; this is

[1] Cf. *Pratyabhijñā Hṛdayam* (Pr.) (Kṣemarāja), Sū 1 (Com).

done during His creative phase, when He presents Himself as the world-manifestation out of His free will and exercises His power of divine freedom, with Himself as His own background (*svecchayā svabhiltau viśvamunmīlayati*).[2] He does not cease to be the *parama* Śiva, the supreme Lord. This is because both these modes of self-manifestation — though appearing to our limited intellect to be mutually opposite in nature — are held to be simultaneous, complementary acts from the point of view of the supreme Lord. His self-manifestation as the universe is only an expression of His divine glory (*aiśvarya*).

The supreme Lord is named Naṭarāja ('the king of *naṭa*' — the supreme actor-*cum*-director), and the world manifestation is called 'the cosmic drama' (*viśvanāṭaka*) when He manifests Himself in His cosmic form as the universe, with an infinite number of subjects or experients (*pramātā*), as well as with an infinite number of objects of knowledge and enjoyment (*prameya*) together with all the instruments of knowledge and enjoyment — all of which exist on every level of creation. When He does so, He does not remain separate from His self-manifestation, but rather participates actively therein, assuming different roles like an actor; thereby, He enjoys the whole show, as an actor, as the director, and as a spectator (*sākṣī*), all rolled into one.

3. Ecstatic delight: the motivating force in His self-manifestation as the world

A question might arise in some discerning minds: why does the supreme Lord manifest Himself as the world at all? Why does He, the Naṭarāja, play the role of a *naṭa* (actor) in the world drama? What does He gain thereby? It is generally seen in the world that one does not engage oneself in any activity without any gain in return, material or otherwise. The supreme Lord is said to be always self-satisfied, and He does not need anything because He always is full in Himself; there is nothing for Him to gain.

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[2] *Ibid*, Sū 2.

The reply generally given by the Advaita Śaiva writers is that the supreme Lord does everything, including His self-manifestation as the multiplicity of the worldly limited beings, in order to experience bliss or delight. When seen from His point of view, His self-manifestation as the world is only His divine sport (*krīḍā*),[3] or '*līlā*' as it is described by other theistic schools of Indian philosophy. It gives Him the experience of ecstatic delight.

The Advaita Śaiva writers explain why and how the supreme Lord experiences delight from His worldly self-manifestation with the analogy of a creative artist, a talented painter, or a gifted poet. Just as a creative artist or a painter or a poet is goaded or motivated by the feeling of delight latent within Him, forcing him to 'let it tangibly manifest' into its appropriate mode of artistry, similarly the supreme Lord, 'full in Himself' — never Himself experiencing any deficiency or want, and always remaining immersed in His infinite bliss-nature — wishes to taste the nectar of bliss outside Himself through His artistic creation, the world manifestation (*pasya devasya kāvyam na jajāra na mamāra*).

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* supports this idea, saying "all beings are born out of delight or bliss, they are sustained in bliss, and at the end they merge into bliss".[4]

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, bliss is conceived by the Advaita Śaiva writers as the *śakti* which is said to exist in two forms, one of which being the infinite bliss-form at the transcendental level, which the supreme Lord experiences while remaining immersed in His fullness-nature (*paripūrṇasvarūpa*).[5] It is said that once when He manifests as the world this great bliss — having welled up within His self to the brim, as it were — spills out and starts flowing from His fullness-nature. He then experiences delight, as would an artist beholding his own creation.

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[3] *Paramārthasāra* (Abhinavagupta) V.5 (*Vivṛti*) p. 12.

[4] Cf. *Bodhapañcadaśikā* (Abhinavagupta), V. 5-6; *Anuttara prakāśapañcaśikā* (Ādyānātha), V. 2.

[5] *Op. cit.*, III, 6.

4. The supreme Lord and His self-manifestation as the world

The relation between the supreme Lord and His voluntary self-manifestation as the world has been depicted differently from various perspectives; these shall now be enumerated.

As it has been mentioned before, some texts describe the divine *śakti* as operating ceaselessly, inseparately fused with the supreme Lord, revealing His nature through two different forms. It is held that the divine *śakti* pulsates while remaining completely identified with Him. His transcendent nature as the Absolute (*anuttara*) shines forth. This is one form. At some times (that is, during their creative mode) the divine *śakti* operates somewhat separately from Him; then, His immanent form as the world-manifestation is revealed.

Some texts describe the supreme Lord's voluntary self-manifestation as the world as His expansion or extension of *śakti* (*sva-śakti-sphāra*).[6] This can be metaphorically expressed as the 'unfurling' (*unmeṣa*) of His *śakti*, which had remained identified with Him in His being-nature (*sattā*), or as the unfolding of His all-pervading cosmic nature in the form of His divine *śakti*.

It may be mentioned here that the Advaita Śaivites sometimes describe the world-manifestation as symbolizing the play of the supreme Lord's divine *śakti*, with each level of existence in creation representing a mode of His *śakti*, or as a phase (*kalā*) of *śakti*. We shall examine the implications of this later, when we discuss the actual process of the manifestation of the world comprised of thirty-six *tattva*s or levels of existence.

Some texts depict the world-manifestation in terms of an involution or a descent (*avaroha*) on the part of the supreme Lord, who occupies every position in creation, from the highest absolute down to the level of gross matter represented by the *mahābhūtas* (gross physical elements). Although the supreme Lord's involution (*avaroha*) or descent consists of a descending order of stages, with

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[6] *Śiva Dṛṣṭi* (Somānanda) I, V.3-4; *Śiva Stotrāvali* (Utpala), I, 6.

each step representing a *tattva* or a level of existence, nevertheless the act of creation or self-manifestation by the supreme Lord as the world is said to be singular, as it does not take place successively in time.[7] It is, therefore, held to be accomplished in a moment, as it were. It is said that the instant that the supreme Lord resolves (*saṅkalpa*) to manifest Himself as the world, it comes to be. In other words, He manifests the world with its infinite multiplicity immediately.[8] This act is technically described as *akrama* (lit., without any succession).

But His return journey from the lowest level of creation (i.e. from the level of gross physical elements) to the highest level of existence is gradual, since it is a process within time (*kāla*). Both time (*kāla*) and succession (*krama*) go hand in hand. Therefore, the Advaita Śaivas say that when a limited embodied being in creation 'moves up', step by step, consequent on his performing spiritual discipline passing through different levels of existence, and reaches the highest level, he becomes aware of the existence of the thirty-six levels of existence through which he had passed. His gradual evolution or ascent in this way is technically called *āroha* (ascent). It has a succession (*krama*), as does one climbing a ladder to finally reach the top.[9]

Incidently, it may be mentioned here that Sri Aurobindo also speaks of the involution of the spiritual principle to the gross level of matter, and its evolution from the level of matter to its pure form of psychic being in his book, *The Life Divine*.

The Advaita Śaiva texts employ another metaphor to describe the process of world-manifestation. The Advaita Śaivites say that the *unmeṣa* of the supreme Lord represents Him 'opening His eyes', and

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[7] *Śivasūtravimarśinī* (Kṣemarāja) I, 6; Also see *Parāpraveśikā* (Kṣemarāja), p. 2; *Paramārthasāra* (Abhinavagupta), V.4 (*vivṛtilom*) p. 10.

[8] *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha*, V. 1 (Com).

[9] *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* Sū 1 (Com).

[10] Cf. Chatterjee, J.C. *Kashmir Shaivism*, p. 146.

the absorption or withdrawal of the world as the closing of His eyes (*nimeṣa*).[10] It is said that when the supreme Lord 'opens Himself outwards' (through His eyes, as it were) the totality of the world in manifestation comes to be. The entire universe with its infinite variety continues to exist in a manifest form as long as the supreme Lord 'keeps His eyes open'. But, when He chooses 'to close His eyes', the world manifestation disappears, getting absorbed into Him. This process, alternating between Him opening and closing His eyes, is perpetually going on, as a mode of His divine play.

The Advaita Śaivism holds that the universe comprised of thirty-six *tattva*s or levels of existence unfolds in (a logical) succession as the divine *śakti* pulsates, remaining somewhat 'distinct' from the supreme Lord. The pulsations of the divine *śakti* are sometimes compared to waves (*ūrmi*) rising in the ocean, without any respite.[11] Carrying this metaphor further, the Advaita Śaiva texts mention that as the waves arise in a quick succession in the ocean of divine *śakti*, a *tattva* (level of existence) is revealed in the wake of the waves. Though this revelation of the *tattvas* in the wake of a *śakti*-wave was never explicitly mentioned, the Sanskrit expression '*paspande*' ('vibrated') found in Amṛtānandanātha's text known as the *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* bears testimony to this interpretation, about the revelation of *tattvas*, one by one, after the passage of the waves in the ocean of *śakti*.[12] While describing the spiritual experiences of a spiritual aspirant following the mode of spiritual discipline within the *sāmbhavopāya*, Abhinavagupta describes in the *Tantrasāra* how the different *tattvas* comprising the world-manifestation are experienced by the aspirant as so many vibrations or waves of divine *śakti*, each vibration symbolizing a phase of this *śakti*.[13] It has deep spiritual implications for *sādhanā*, which will be explained later.

31-[11] *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, Sū 1 (com.).

32-[12] *Parāpraveśikā*, p. 2.

33-[13] *Op. cit.*, V. 1 (com).

5. Nature of *ābhāsa* (self-manifestation as the world)

The Advaita Śaiva texts call the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the world as '*ābhāsa*'. It is a technical term used in Advaita Śaivism which needs some explanation, as this term has also been used by Śaṅkara's 'idealist' school of Advaita Vedānta to signify the 'appearance' of the multiplicity of the world in the unity of *brahman*. The Advaita Śaivites are realists, therefore they use this term to signify the self-manifestation by the supreme Lord as the world is a 'real' or existent manifestation, deriving this connotative meaning from the Sanskrit root '*bhāsa*' from which the term *ābhāsa* is formed. The Sanskrit root *bhāsa* means 'to shine' or 'to appear'; the verbal form conjugated from this root is *bhāsate*, meaning the 'passive act' of shining or appearing. The causal verbal form of this root *bhāsa* is *bhasayati*, meaning 'causes or makes to shine or appear'.[14] It has been used by Advaita Śaiva writers to convey this sense.

The verbal form *bhāsate* or *ābhāsate* appears to be more appropriate to describe the view of Śāṅkara Vedāntins of the world-manifestation having the nature of an unreal 'appearance', while the form of *bhāsayati* or *ābhāsayati* with the prefix '*ā*' meaning 'causes to shine or appear' is in conformity with the Advaita Śaiva view about the nature of world-manifestation. The Advaita Śaivites use this term *ābhāsa* to signify the world-manifestation as the real self-manifestation of the supreme Lord. It is said that the supreme Lord is endowed with infinite powers, such as divine freedom. Out of His free will, He resolves to manifest Himself as the world. Prior to its manifestation, it lies within His bosom in an 'undifferentiated' form which He causes to shine, first within Himself, which He alone experiences. Then, He projects it out of Himself by exercising the appropriate power (*śakti*) to make it appear 'externally', as it were. The world-manifestation appears to Him as a divine sport which He conducts to experience delight; therefore, it cannot be unreal.

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[14] Cf. *Op.cit.*, Ah III.

As a matter of fact, in Advaita Śaivism for the Lord to 'create' means 'to throw out' that which is contained within Himself in its ideal form as a subjective experience. He does not use any other material substance to perform this. Here, mention may be made of the *Īśvara-Pratyabhijñā Kārikā* of Utpaladeva, who has compared the supreme Lord with a powerful *yogin* creating objects without using any prior material. To quote this text: "The supreme Lord whose essence is *cit* [i.e. the universal consciousness] causes the collective of objects which exists within Him to shine outside [Himself] through His free will, without using any external material, as a powerful *yogin* would cause objects which exist within his mind as 'ideas' appear outside [in concrete form] out of his mere will."[15]

In his *Paramārthasāra* Abhinavagupta described the manifestation of the universe in this way: "just as, [when reflected] in a clear mirror, the images of cities, villages and the like appear different from one another as well as from the mirror itself, in the same way the world-manifestation — though non-different from the mirror of consciousness [which is] *parama* Śiva [which actually serves Him as His *citta*] — appears to be different from both, in respect to its various objects and to the universal consciousness."[16] Here it must be repeated that, in this context, since it represents the concrete projection of His 'idea', the 'shining' or appearance of the worldly manifestation within the mirror of consciousness of the supreme Lord is real, and not false, as it would be if it were merely imagined, or conjured by a magician.

The Advaita Śaivites develop another metaphor to describe the manifestation or 'shining' of the world, that of a painter. A number of steps are involved in his act of painting. First, within himself grows a faint 'desire' to begin to paint; this step is called 'will' (*icchā*). In the beginning it is vague, but it soon takes a definite form when the painter makes the resolve to paint (*saṅkalpa*). He then has a clear

[15] *Paramārthasāra* (Abhinavagupta) V. 14.

[16] *Op. cit.*, I, 5, 7.

mental picture or vision of what he is going to paint. This is due to the activity of the knowledge-power (*jñāna śakti*) within him. In this way, *icchā* (will) develops into resolve (*saṅkalpa*), thence to knowledge (*jñāna*); finally he takes up the brush, paints and canvas and starts giving concrete form to his 'imagination' or vision; this represents the final step, which is due to the power of action, the *kriyā śakti*.

Through this analogy of painting a scene, Advaita Śaivism describes how the supreme Lord manifests as the world, with Himself serving as the background (*bhittau*), exercising His powers of will, knowledge and action which constitute the three modes of the activity of His *svātantrya śakti*. Such self-manifestation as the universe (*ābhāsa*) cannot but be real. These three modes of His *svātantrya śakti,* responsible for His self-manifestation as world, may be diagrammatically represented by a triangle with an inverted vertex, each angle in the triangle symbolizing the powers of will, knowledge and action; in this context, this whole is called *visarga* (emergence).[17]

In his *Paramārthasāra*, Abhinavagupta explained the significance of the trident (*triśūla*) that many images show in one hand of Lord Śiva. He says that the three tines of His trident represent the *śakti*s of will, knowledge and action.[18] Hence, the trident should be regarded as His weapon of creation, and not of destruction, as is popularly imagined.

6. Meaning of *tattva* in macrocosmic and microcosmic forms, constituting the cosmos and the embodied individual

The word *tattva* is a technical term used by most schools of Indian philosophy to describe the sphere of creation (*brahmāṇḍa*), or 'cosmos'. Its real significance must first be determined before it is used to describe the cosmos. At the outset, it must be pointed out that some schools use the term *padārtha* in the place of *tattva* to describe worldly phenomena. Now, the question arises, whether the two terms

[17] *Op. cit*, V. 12-13; see also *Tantrāloka*, II, 4.

[18] See the diagram p. 55.

of *tattva* and *padārtha* are synonymous or not, and what the difference is or not. The term *padārtha* is generally found in the texts of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy to signify all kinds of metaphysical categories which include both objective as well as abstract realities, e.g. substance, attribute, activity, generic attributes (*samanya*), means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), doubt (*saṁśaya*), false knowledge (*viparya*), fallacies of inference (*hetvābhāsa*), and so forth. The term *tattva* is used to signify only the objective realities, therefore those which are capable of being cognized by any percipient as objects of knowledge.[19]

The term *tattva* — literally meaning 'that which has being' or 'an aspect of a reality' — is employed in the descriptions of worldly manifestation, signifying a constituent element of creation or a level of existence which constitutes the cosmos. Sāṁkhya and the Pātañjala Yoga talk about twenty-four *tattvas*: twenty-three are insentient in nature, evolving from *prakṛti*, the mother-creatrix of the objective world, and one is *puruṣa*, the principle of consciousness, the sentient spectator for whom creation takes place. The physical bodies of embodied *puruṣa*s are also made up of these material *tattvas* or elements.

The Advaita Vedāntins of Śaṅkara's school admit the existence of twenty-two *tattva*s appearing in two forms: in their cosmic form (*samaṣṭi*), in which they are said to pervade the entire cosmos in that they constitute the different levels of creation within the sphere of creation (called the *brahmāṇḍa*), and in their individual states (*vyaṣṭi*), which form the psycho-physical apparatus or body of every embodied individual being. This view, propagated by the Advaita Vedāntins, is in accordance with their doctrine *yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmāṇḍa* ("as is found in the physical bodies of embodied beings, such is the case with the entire cosmos").

The Advaita Śaivites of Kashmir hold similar views on this subject. They also hold that every embodied individual being has his

[19] *Op. cit.*, V. 45.

psychophysical apparatus made up of thirty-five *tattvas*, or constituent elements. The world-manifestation also consists of the same thirty-five *tattvas* or levels of existence, in their universal form. In other words, this means that the thirty-*tattvas* constitute the psychophysical framework of all embodied beings when in a microcosmic form, whilst in their macrocosmic state, they form the entire cosmos. It is held that every experient or sentient subject exists on each level of world-creation along with objects of knowledge and enjoyment. This comprises the totality of world-manifestation.

The Advaita Śaivites postulate that these levels of creation which comprise the cosmos exist in hierarchical order (*sopāna krama*) based on the cause-and-effect relation existing among them. It is held that each preceding *tattva* in the list of thirty-five *tattvas* (with the *paramaśiva tattva* at the apex) is the cause of the next, and that each succeeding *tattva* constitutes the effect of the former. The Advaita Śaivites therefore arrange all the *tattvas* in a causal chain, as it were, forming the total structure of the universe. As is universally acknowledged, each *tattva* which comprises the cause of the next is relatively more pervasive than the latter *tattvas*.

This idea of the relative pervasion of the *tattvas* arranged in descending order forming the chain of cause and effect can be better understood on the analogy of concentric circles with gradually decreasing diameters, arranged in hierarchical order, each circle representing a *tattva* or level of existence in creation. For example, the level of existence called *sadāśiva tattva* at the top of the hierarchy of *tattvas* can be represented by the circle with the widest diameter, while the level of existence represented by the *pṛthvī tattva* (occupying the lowest position in the hierarchy of *tattvas*) can be symbolized by the circle with the smallest diameter, with all the other *tattvas* being represented by circles of varying diameter between these two extremities.[20]

[20] See author's article in the *Mm. Gopinath Kaviraj Felicitation Volume*, Lucknow (1964).

7. World manifestation: an overview

The Advaita Śaiva texts broadly classify all the thirty-six *tattvas* constituting the universe under two categories, one comprised of the *tattvas* included in the 'pure realm' or sphere (*śuddha adhva*), the other of those *tattvas* within the 'impure realm' or sphere (*aśuddha adhva*).[21] Five *tattvas* or levels of creation form the pure sphere: *śivatattva*, *śaktitattva*, *sadāśivatattva*, *īśvaratattva* and the *śuddha vidyā tattva*. Constituting the impure sphere of creation is the group of thirty-one *tattvas* beginning with *māyā tattva* and her progency of five *kañcukas* (lit. covers), *puruṣa*, *prakṛti*, *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra*, *manas*, the ten sense organs, the five subtle elements and the five gross physical elements.

One might naturally like to know the basis for such classification of *tattvas* under 'pure' and 'impure' categories, and the implication thereof. The Advaita Śaiva writers provide the answer in this way: they state that divine *śakti*, functioning ceaselessly (yet, as mentioned, somewhat distinct from the supreme Lord during His self-manifestations as the universe) operates in three different forms on the three stadia of creation. She operates on the highest stadium in a pure form, as the consciousness-force (*cit śakti*), also called 'Mahāmāyā' when the five pure levels of existence represented by five *tattvas* (listed above) are manifested. These five levels of worldly creation are regarded as 'pure' for two reasons: for their being universal in nature (*viśvātmaka*), and on account of their being manifested as a result of the activity of the divine *śakti* in a pure form, as the power of consciousness.[22] As will be discussed later, the five experients or subjects which exist at each of these five levels of existence perceive the totality of universal manifestation (*viśva*) such that the objects of their experiences are known to be non-different from themselves; there is a total absence of duality in their experience. These five levels of existence represented by five *tattvas* are said to be 'ideal' in

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[21] Chatterjee, J.C., *Kashmir Shaivism*, pp. 146 ff.

[22] *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Saṅdoha*, V. 4-5 (com); Also see *Tantrasāra* (Abhinavagupta) Ah. VIII.

form because the various subjects on these five pure levels of existence have *aham* (I-experience) as their self-experience, and they perceive the totality of the world as '*idam*' reflected in the mirror of consciousness (*cinmaya-darpana*). This paradigm — self-experience as *aham* with the experience of the totality of universal manifestation as *idam* ('this-ness') — is the form of 'an idea of a notion' reflected in the mirror of their consciousness. This experience is looked upon as *nirvikalpa* in nature, being outside the purview of thought-constructs (*vikalpa*) due to the absence of any finite intellect or mind at that level. Due to these notions, these levels of experience are said to be all-embracing or universal in nature.

The same divine *śakti* operates on a second, lower level, just below the first one, as the power of obscuration (*tirodhāna śakti*), usually called *māyā śakti*. The Advaita Śaiva school holds her responsible for ushering in the all-prevasive duality and discreteness which culminates in the manifestation of multiplicity. The activity of *māyā śakti* on this second stadium marks the manifestation of the impure sphere, called the *aśuddha adhva*. This sphere is the harbinger of grossness and multiplicity.[23]

The *tattvas* or levels of existence which manifest in the wake of the activity of *māyā śakti* are *māyā*, *kalā*, *vidyā*, *rāga*, *kāla*, *niyati* and *puruṣa*. The *tattvas* beginning with *māyā* (which is different in nature from *māyā śakti*) are collectively called the *kañcukas* (cloaks or coverings). The *puruṣa tattva* is an offshoot of the self-imposed limitations and coverings that the monadic consciousness (*cid-aṇu*) puts upon itself, through *māyā śakti* and the (self-created) *kañcukas*: this will explained in the next chapter.

It must be clarified here that, in the context of creation, the term *tattva* — though generally used to signify a level of creation — cannot be understood as such in the case of *māyā* and her progeny of five *kañcukas*, because these *tattvas* are in the form of veils or covers only insofar as they serve the purpose of concealing the nature of

[23] *Ibid*, V. 4, (Com).

consciousness in its true monadic form. A veil obviously cannot be given the status of a level of existence.

The divine *śakti* which is active on the lowest stadium is the gross material power, technically called *prakṛti śakti*, and is held responsible for the manifestation of the gross material world from the *prakṛti tattva* down to the *pṛthvī tattva* (earth). The *tattvas* manifested as a result of the activity of *prakṛti śakti* are *buddhi* (the intellect), *ahaṁkāra* (egoity), *manas* (mind), five powers of sense perception called the *jñānendriyas*, five powers of action (*kriyā*) called the *karmendriyas*, five subtle primary elements (*tanmātrās*) and five gross elements or *pañca mahābhūta*, making a total of twenty-four *tattvas*.

This completes the entire range of the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the universe out of His free will (*svatantra icchā*), when exercising His divine power of freedom (*svātantrya*).

It may be mentioned here that Abhinavagupta, the foremost exponent of the Advaita Śaiva thought in Kashmir, has suggested a slightly different classification of thirty-six *tattvas*. According to him, the entire range of creation can be broadly classified under four categories called *aṇḍas* (spheres), which collectively constitute the *brahmāṇḍa*, i.e. the universe. These are (1) the *śaktyaṇḍa* (the sphere of *śakti* as *Mahāmāyā*) (2) the *māyāṇḍa* (the sphere of *māyā*) (3) the *prakṛtyaṇḍa* (the sphere of *prakṛti*) and (4) *pṛthvyāṇḍa* (the sphere of gross physical matter). [See the enclosed diagram p. 75-76]

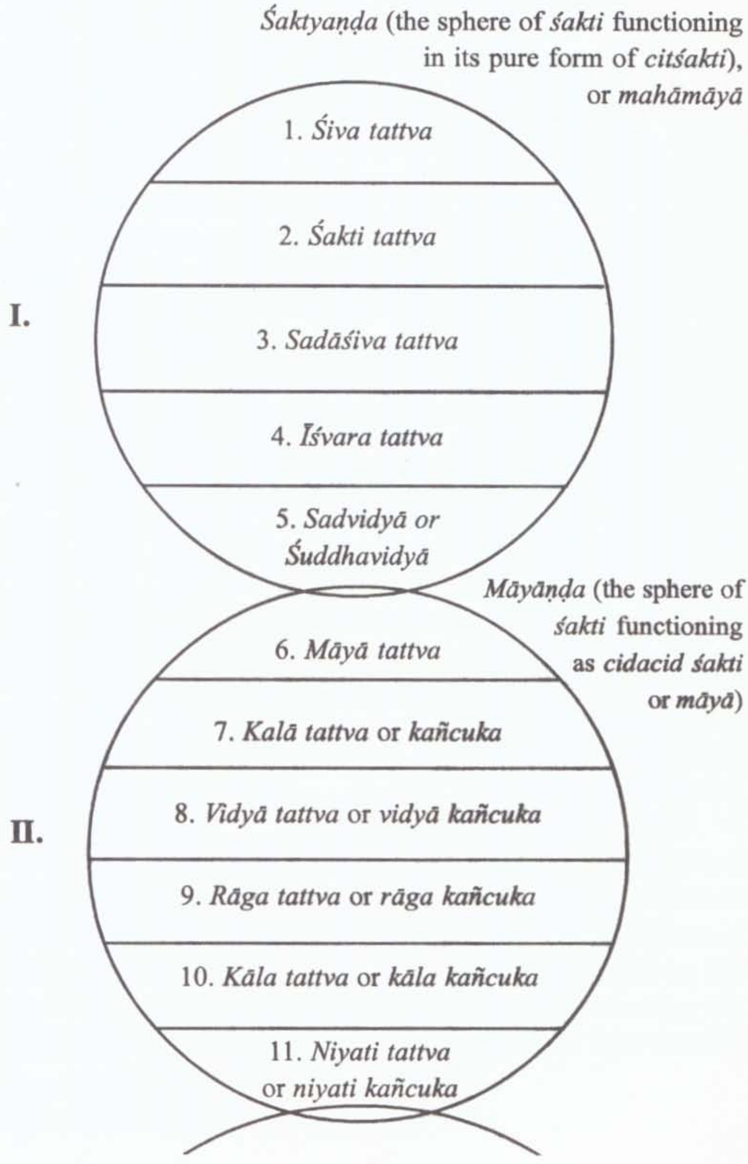
The divine *śakti* in its purest form of consciousness-power (*cit śakti*) dominates within the topmost sphere of creation, therefore this sphere is called the sphere of *śakti* (*śaktyaṇḍa*); five levels of existence (*tattva*) arranged in a descending order are said to exist in *śaktyaṇḍa*.

Below this sphere of creation (*aṇḍa*) lies the *māyāṇḍa* comprised of five *tattvas*, namely *māyā*, *kalā*, *rāga*, *kāla* and *niyati*.

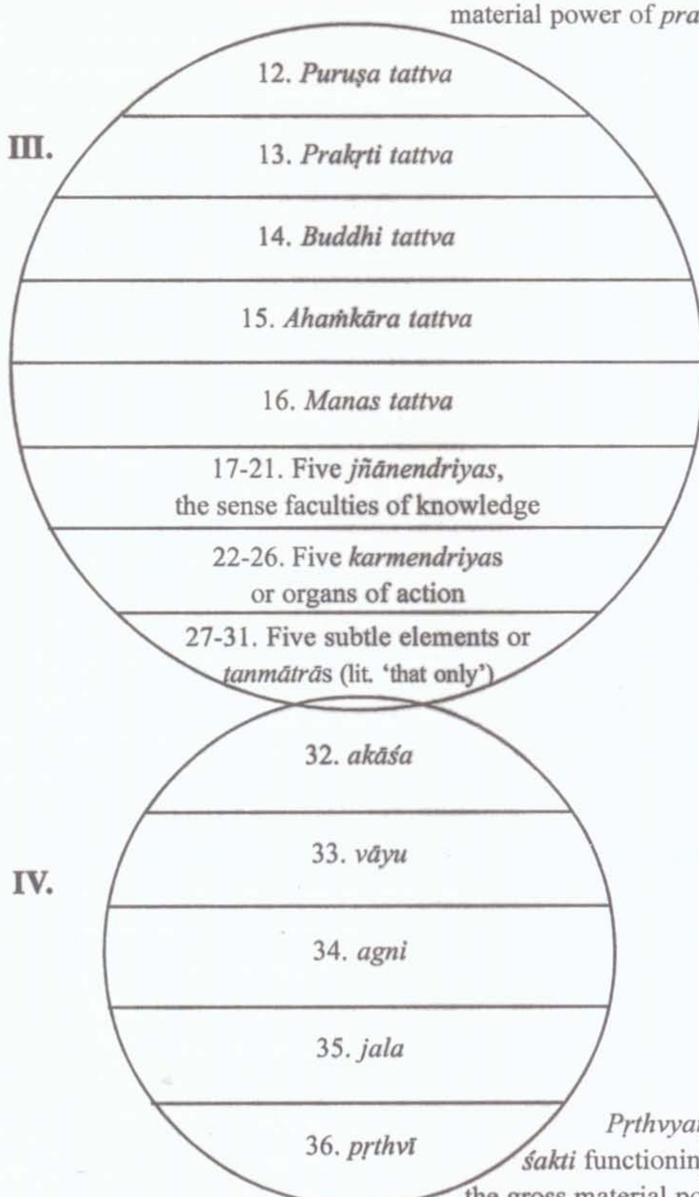
The *prakṛtyaṇḍa* extends from *prakṛti tattva* down to the five subtle elements (*tanmātrās*), while the *pṛthvyaṇḍa* is said to be comprised of the five gross elements, *ākāśa* (ether), *vāyu* (air), *tejas* (*agni* or fire), *jala* (water) and *pṛthvī* (earth).[24]

[24] *Ibid*, V. 5 (com).

Diagram depicting the world manifestation classified under the categories of the *aṇḍas* with the spheres of activity of the divine *śakti*.



Prakṛtyānda (sphere of *śakti* functioning as *acid śakti* or material power of *prakṛti*



Pṛthvyaṇḍa, *śakti* functioning as the gross material power

The Advaita Śaiva writers sometimes refer to the divine *śakti* as 'Vāmeśvarī' because She 'spits' (*vāmā*) the universe from the 'womb' of the transcendent absolute consciousness (*anuttara*). The divine *śakti* is called Vāmeśvarī for another reason as well: the divine *śakti* identified as existing with Śiva causes the unfolding of the unity-consciousness, while simultaneously functioning somewhat distinctly from Śiva, revealing the nature of Śiva-consciousness through the experience of difference (*bheda-pratīti*).

Vāmeśvarī is further classified under four subdivisions, viz., the *khecarī*, *gocarī*, *dikcarī* and *bhucarī śaktis*. These *śaktis* respectively regulate their respective spheres of operation and existence: the empirical subject, the activity of the internal (cognitive) organs (*antaḥkaraṇa*), the external organs of sense (*bāhyakaraṇa*), and external objects. These *śaktis* are conceived as constituting *cakras* (circles), indicating limitations to their spheres of operation.[25]

8. Nature of the thirty-six *tattvas*

The view of the Advaita Śaiva philosophy of Kashmir regarding the creation of the universe as the self-manifestation of the supreme Lord holds that the unfoldment (*unmeṣa*) of His immanent nature was comprised of thirty-six steps of His involution (*avaroha*) as levels of creation, represented by so many *tattvas*. As was mentioned earlier, these *tattvas* exist simultaneously in two distinct forms: in their cosmos-pervading form, and simulataneously they appear in a limited form as the constituents of the psycho-physical framework of every embodied individual being.

Since the world-manifestation symbolizes the involution or descent (*avaroha*) of the supreme Lord from the highest spiritual level on which He is said to exist to the gross level of matter, it would perhaps be more appropriate if we throw some light on His nature as the source of world-manifestation before discussing the nature of the *tattvas*. In his small work called the *Īśvarasiddhi*,

[25] *Paramārthasāra*, V. 4.

Utpaladeva examined the nature of *parama* Śiva as both the material and the efficient cause of the world manifestation, refuting the views of the Buddhists, the Sāṁkhya and Mīmāṁsakas who do not admit the existence of God.[26]

Parama Śiva

It has been observed before that the Advaita Śaiva school delineates the nature of ultimate reality into the categories of abstract metaphysical principles — the essential feature of the metaphysics of most Indian philosophies — with a theistic persona, in the manifestation of which He is said to play an important role in *sādhanā*. As an abstract metaphysical principle (*tattva*) or concept, he is called the *ātman* (the underlying reality of all that exists), *caitanya* (the supreme consciousness), *saṁvid* (the supreme experiencing principle), *anuttara*, *tattvātīta* (the transcendent absolute). His form is abstractly known as the *prakāśa-vimarśa-maya*[27] — *prakāśa*, the self-effulgent light symbolizing *caitanya* in its static form, called Śiva, with *vimarśa*, the ever-active power of self-revelation innate within consciousness, symbolized by *śakti*, the ever-active power of dynamism.[28] *Parama* Śiva is described as the perfect equilibrium of the *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* aspects of His nature, or his aspects of Śiva coupled with Śakti.[29]

The theistic expression of the supreme reality is known variously as *Parama* Śiva, Parameśvara ('the supreme Lord'), and Parapramātā ('the supreme subject'). He is endowed with infinite powers (*śakti*) which is only one aspect of His nature, the essence of His divinity. In his *Parāpraveśikā* Kṣemarāja described *śakti* as 'the heart of the supreme Lord'.[30] *Śakti* has been compared to a seed which contains the entire tree in its potential form, for a later manifestation. To quote a verse from the *Parātriṁśikā* (verse 24) — "As the great

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[26] *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, Sū 12 (com.).

[27] *Īśvarasiddhi* (Utpaladeva).

[28] *Parāpraveśikā*, p. 1-2.

[29] *Kāmakalāvilāsa*.

[30] *Śiva Dṛṣṭi*, III, 2,3.

banyan tree lies in a subtle form in the seed, so does the entire universe, with all its moving and immobile creations, lay within the heart of the supreme Being, in a potential form."[31]

The *parama* Śiva holds within His bosom the divine *śakti* pulsating in its infinite forms, which can be summarized within five principal terms: *cid-ānanda-icchā-jñāna-kriyā*. (consciousness-power, bliss-power, will-power, knowledge-power, and active-power).[32]

The *cid* or *citśakti* symbolizes the power of self-revelation by which *parama* Śiva shines by Himself. He is called 'Śiva', denoting the radiant, static aspect of His nature.

The *ānandaśakti* symbolizes the power of bliss. He is always experiencing His bliss-nature, remaining immersed in it; His bliss-nature is an offshoot of His fullness-nature (*paripūrṇa svabhāva*).

The *icchāśakti* represents the power of free will inherent within the supreme Lord. This *śakti* lies at the root of all His creational activity, including His self-manifestation as the universe. Its activity marks the beginning of the unfolding of His immanent nature (*viśvātmaka svarūpa*).

Jñānaśakti symbolizes the power of knowing, innate within Him. The activity of this power of knowing within Him always makes Him aware of both His nature as the supreme Lord on one hand, and the universe on the other.

The *kriyāśakti* symbolizes His power to assume any and every form He wants; the activity of this *śakti* is responsible for the revelation of His glory (*aiśvarya*) as the independent supreme agent (*svatantraḥ kartā*).[33]

Advaita Śaivism holds that this fivefold aspect of His power of divine freedom (*svātantrya śakti*), inseparably fused within Him, reveals His divine nature as the supreme Lord, and His glory (*aiśvarya*) as the world-manifestation.

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[31] *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

[32] *Op. cit.*, V. 24.

[33] *Tantrasāra*, *upodghāta* p. 5; also see *Tattvādhva*, Āh. VIII.

Since His self-manifestation as the world represents His self-extension or self-expansion with regards to *śakti* (*svaśakti sphāra*), all these five modes of the activity of the divine *śakti* are revealed in succession, at different steps over the course of the unfolding of His immanent nature.

Parama Śiva is known in Śaivism as the free agent (*svatantra kartā*)[34] on account of His having *svātantrya śakti*. As the supreme Lord, He is said to ceaselessly perform five functions which are inalienable from His divine nature.[35] These functions are *nigraha* (His act of self-limitation or contraction), *sṛṣṭi* (the act of self-manifestation as the world), *sthiti* (the maintenance or preservation of His self-manifestation as the world) *saṁhāra* (the aborption or withdrawal of His manifestation as the world), and *anugraha* (the dispensation of grace). These functions are held to be eternal functions because the supreme Lord is said to perform these functions from a level outside the realm of time and space. As these functions persist cyclically (which too is conceived to be a logical order), it is not possible to pinpoint the starting point of these functions. However, seen from the point of view of His self-manifestation as the universe, *nigraha*, the voluntary act of His self-limitation (*saṅkoca*), may be regarded as the starting point in the cycle of different functions.

His act of *nigraha* consists in His imposing limitations upon Himself, as a result of which His absolute nature as the supreme experiencing principle (*parāsaṁvid*) withdraws to the background, and He assumes the forms of those subjects who have only their limited experience (*mita pramātā*). His divine nature is eclipsed, and He appears in a monadic form (*aṇurūpa*). The act of *nigraha* is said to be completed over several steps, which will be discussed during the examination of the nature of those defilements (*malas*) which envelop the contracted monadic beings (*cidaṇu*).

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[34] *Īśvarapratyabhijñā Karikā* (Utpala) I, 204.

[35] Cf. *Pāṇinisūtra*.

The act of *nigraha* by the supreme Lord brings about in its wake the unfolding of the *tattva*s which constitute the entire cosmos. This function is known as *sṛṣṭi* (creation). In the beginning, all these unfolded levels manifest only as the self-experience (*parāmarśa*) of the supreme Lord, the supreme experiencing principle (*saṁvid*), as mere 'ideas' which later assume concrete objective forms owing to the activity of the divine *śakti* as *māyāśakti* and *prakṛtiśakti*. Only then do the *tattvas* appear in a concrete form, outside and independent from the self-experience of the supreme Lord.

The functions of *sthiti* and *saṁhāra*, representing the acts of preservation and absorption of the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the universe, are other two important functions connected with His self-manifestation as the universe.

The supreme Lord's function of *anugraha*, or dispensation of His grace, is a unique function which exists on an altogether different plane. The function of *anugraha* serves as the instrument to bring an end to His self-manifestation as the universe.

The function of *anugraha* can be seen from the point of view of the limited individual being, the self-contracted spiritual monad, as well as from that of the supreme Lord, the performer of the fivefold functions. Inasmuch as the self-contracted individual beings are concerned, the infusion of divine grace marks the end of their self-contracted form (*aṇurūpa*). The divinity lying latent in them is aroused due to the supreme Lord's act of *anugraha*. Seen from the viewpoint of the supreme Lord, this function of *anugraha* represents the act by which He restores His own original divine nature, called the *śivatva*.

Śiva tattva

The supreme Lord's self-manifestation as *śiva tattva* represents the first step in the involutional movement towards His self-manifestation as the universe. It has been stated in the *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Saṅdoha* that when the supreme Lord within His divine freedom (*svātantrya śakti*) feels like "letting loose the potential universe contained within Him [i.e. as His divine *śakti*]", the first flutter

(*spanda*) of His divine *śakti* takes the form of *śiva tattva*. To quote the first verse from this text — "As the supreme Lord, beyond whom nothing exists (*anuttara*), when exercising His own free will He 'vibrates' or moves out towards His self-manifestation as the universe, the first flutter (*spanda*) of His power of divine freedom is called the *śiva tattva* by those who know the truth."[36]

As a result of this, the supreme Lord's divine *śakti* — which was operating completely fused with Him, thereby revealing His nature (*svarūpa*) as the transcendent being (*anuttara*) — starts functioning somewhat distinctly from Him (as it were), in the form of His self-experience, initially only as the *pūrṇāhaṁtā* (the supreme I-experience).[37] At that stage, there is no trace of the universe whatsoever in His self-experience, even in a seminal form (*bīja rūpa*) — not even as a subjective experience or an 'idea'. Therefore, His self-experience in that stage is said to be 'full-in-itself' (*paripūrṇa*).

The Advaita Śaivas describe this stage of the supreme Lord's self-experience by using the metaphor of the mirror and the reflection of an object of experience therein. It is held by them that the *prakāśa* aspect of *caitanya* (the consciousness-nature of the supreme Lord) is the reflecting medium or the mirror, and the *vimarśa* aspect of *caitanya* represents the self-experience. Since the supreme Lord at that stage shines as the pure light (*prakāśa*), as it were, in the mirror of consciousness, and that there is then no object appearing even in the form of an idea in the mirror of consciousness,[38] the self-experience of the supreme Lord takes the form of the pure I-experience (*ahaṁtā*) without even the thought of 'being' (*ahamiti*) as it were, in His self-experience.

The *cit* aspect alone of the divine *śakti* dominates in that state.

It is held that while manifesting Himself as the *śivatattva*, the supreme Lord remaining exactly and in every respect the same as He

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[36] Cf. *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, benedictory verse; also see Sū 10 *Anuttara prakāśa pañcāśikā*, V. 2.

[37] *Op. cit.*, v. 1.

[38] Cf. *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* Sū 12 (Com); Also see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā Kārikā* I, 6, 1.

was, the *parama* Śiva, so that the two — the supreme Lord (*parama* Śiva) and the *śivatattva* exist simultaneously, each including the other. It is on this account that the *śivatattva* is, strictly speaking, held to be eternally existent and is therefore not counted as a *tattva* which constitutes the universe as such.

Śakti tattva

The supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the *śakti tattva* signalizes the second step in His unfolding as the universe. It is held that the divine *śakti* operates on this level as the power of negation (*niṣedhavyāpārarūpā*) of His absolute or fullness-nature (*anuttara* or *paripūrṇa svarūpa*),[39] creating thereby a void (*śūnya*) in His experience, as it were, making room for the universe to appear in an ideal or seed form at the subsequent steps, from the level of *sadāśivatattva* onwards. It is said that the creation of *śūnya* in the supreme Lord's self-experience by the activity of His divine *śakti* as the power of negation is a logical necessity, an essential precondition for the idea of the totality of the universe to emerge upon the background of the supreme Lord's self-experience as the void. As a matter of fact, the supreme Lord's involution or descent to *śaktitattva* may be regarded as the end of the state of His fullness-nature, and the beginning of the era of a dichotomy in His self-experience that grows more prominent at every subsequent step in His involution. According to the Advaita Śaiva philosophy, the reason to hold this view is that the idea of the multiplicity of the universe cannot appear directly and suddenly in the supreme Lord's self-experience of unity. He must first create a chism or a dichotomy in His self-experience as the unity of His own nature; this he does by first creating a void therein, followed by the appearance of the 'other', 'different from Himself'. The appearance of multiplicity into His self-experience requires this, and the supreme Lord's involution as *śakti tattva* performs this task.

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[39] *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* V. 1 (com.).

The *ānanda* (bliss) aspect of the supreme Lord's divine *śakti* is said to be dominant at this stage.[40] As has already been mentioned, the dominance of *ānanda śakti* on this level is indicative of the fullness-nature of the supreme Lord on the one hand, and on the other, it demonstrates the 'outflow' of *ānanda śakti* marking the manifestation of other *tattvas*.

Kṣemarāja, in his commentary on the *Śiva Stotrāvali*, described it this way: "Śakti, thrown up out of delight, lets herself go forth into manifestation."[41]

In this regard, it may be pointed out that some texts (e.g. the *Śivadṛṣṭi*, the *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā*, the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, and so forth) hold that the *śiva* and *śakti tattvas* are eternally existent, despite their being held to be involutions following the descent of *parama* Śiva. These texts regard them as lying outside the range of creation.

The *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* however holds that the *śiva* and *śakti tattvas* are two distinct *tattvas* which constitute the pure realm of creation (*śuddha adhva*), while nevertheless supporting the idea that these *tattvas* are coexistent with the supreme Lord, *parama* Śiva.

Sadāśiva tattva

The next step in the involutionary movement of the supreme Lord is known as the *sadāśiva tattva*, also called the *sādākhya tattva*. The universe — about to be manifested in the subtle, 'ideal' form which is technically known as *sat* (being), having been catalyzed by the *idam* (the ideal 'this'-ness, or the object of experience) — appears for the first time in the self-experience (*svātmaparāmarśa*) of the supreme Lord. The *idam*, representing the totality of the universe, on that level remains 'hazy' or unclear (*dhyāmala*) in the self-experience of the supreme Lord, on account of it having just 'popped up' or begun to 'shine' for the first time. It is therefore held that the self-experience of the supreme Lord, the supreme subject on this level,

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[40] *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*. Sūtra 4 (com.).

[41] *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* V. 2 (com.).

takes the form of '*ahameva idam*' ('I am this'); herein, *aham* (i.e. the self-experience by the Lord as the subject) shines prominently, dominating the *idam* (i.e. the totality of the universe in an 'ideal' form) in the mirror of His consciousness. So, it is said that self-experience on this level is *aham* (the subject) overshadowing the *idam*.[42]

The *icchā śakti* (the divine *śakti* as will) is said to function prominently on this level, marking the beginning of the process of world-manifestation. The activity of the *icchā śakti* on this level is the cause of the universe unfolding in its 'ideal' form, which lays hidden within the bosom of the supreme Lord.[43]

It is held that the supreme Lord showers his grace upon the 'fettered' (i.e. the limited beings existing on the mundane level) from this level of *sadāśiva tattva*.[44]

Īśvara tattva

The supreme Lord reveals Himself as the *īśvara tattva* at His next stage of descent. It is held that the totality of the universe, existing in an 'ideal' form as represented by the term *idam*, becomes so prominent within His self-experience that it takes the form of '*idameva aham*' ('This am I'), wherein *idam* (the object) overshadows *aham* (the subject). When this happens, *idam* shines with a greater clarity in the self-experience of the supreme subject, as it were, pushing the *aham* aspect into 'the background' of His self-experience. The decline of the prominence of the *aham* aspect in His self-experience enables the supreme Lord to make 'a full survey of His divine glory' which is expressed as the manifestation of the universe.

It is held that the mode of the divine *śakti* called *jñāna śakti* (knowledge-power) is dominant on this level.[45] As a result of the activity of this *jñāna śakti*, the dichotomy of the universal subject

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[42] *Op. cit.*, IV, 13-14 (com.)

[43] *Saṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* V. 3 (com.); also see Pr. Ltd. p. 7.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*

and the universal object (symbolized by *aham* and *idam*) gets a secure root in the supreme Lord's self-experience (*svātmaparāmarśa*). However, this dichotomy is said to be grounded in the experience of unity (*abheda*).

One should not confuse the *īśvara tattva* with the supreme Lord (*parama īśvara*, or *parameśvara*). The Advaita Śaiva texts designate the supreme reality as the *parameśvara*, who is both the material and the efficient cause of the world-manifestation; therefore, He occupies the highest position, remaining aloof from the process of the self-manifestation of the universe. The *īśvara tattva* occupies the fourth position from the top in the hierarchy of the *tattvas*.

Śuddha vidyā

The next and the final step in the involutional movement by the supreme Lord within the realm of the pure creation (*śuddha adhva*) is named the *śuddha vidyā*. It is said that the two poles in the supreme Lord's self-experience, *aham* and *idam* at this level become equally prominent and balanced, like two pans in an evenly-held scale.[46] Though *aham* and *idam* shine in His self-experience with the same degree of clarity at this level, the supreme Lord is nevertheless always conscious of their essential non-difference. The self-experience by the supreme Lord at this level can be described as being of the nature of 'duality within unity' (*bhedābheda vimarśa*). This results in a better appraisal, and a more clear experience, of both *idam* and *aham*. The *idam* (object) appears in His self-experience as distinct from *aham*, and yet remains an inseparable part of the *aham*.

The *kriyā* mode of the divine *śakti* is more prominent on this level,[47] thus paving the way for further involutions of the supreme Lord into the realm of matter.

With the manifestation of the level of *śuddha vidyā*, the involutional movement or descent of the supreme Lord within the sphere of creation (called *śuddha adhva*) comes to an end. This sphere is

[46] *Ibid*, V. 4 (com.).

[47] *Ibid*.

called the sphere of divine *śakti* in its pure form, the consciousness-*śakti* called the *mahāmāyā*. As mentioned before, Abhinavagupta names this sphere '*śāktyaṇḍa*'. The distinguishing feature of this sphere is the firm experience of the non-duality of the subjective and objective poles within the self-experience at every level of existence, within all the different *tattvas*.

Another distinguishing feature of all the levels of existence within this pure creation is that all the self-experiences are 'ideal' — that is, they exist within the 'mirror of consciousness' of the supreme Lord as His 'ideas'. There is no manifestation of the universe outside the self-experience of the supreme experiencing being, *samvid*.

The impure domain of creation (aśuddha adhva)

Below the sphere of *mahāmāyā* lies the domain of 'impure creation', *aśuddha adhvā*. Extending from the level of the *māyā tattva* down to the level of *pṛthvī tattva*, this domain is said to exist in a gross material form outside of, and independent from, the experient supreme Lord. It consists of different *tattvas*, or levels of existence.

Again, the domain of impure creation is subdivided under two broad categories, according to whether the divine *śakti* responsible for their manifestation is functioning as *māyā śakti* or *prakṛti śakti*. Abhinavagupta gave these sub-domains in creation the names '*māyāṇḍa*' and '*prakṛtyaṇḍa*'.[48]

The sphere of māyā śakti

Māyā tattva

The first level of creation in the sphere of *māyā* (*māyāṇḍa*) is the *māyā tattva*. Before we examine the nature of *māyā tattva*, it would perhaps he pertinent to mention the derivative meaning of the Sanskrit term *māyā*, which occurs in many texts on Indian philo-

[48] *Ibid*; also see *Īśvarapratyabhijñā Kārikā* (com.) III, 1,3.

sophy — particularly in the Upaniṣads and in the texts of the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara.

The term *māyā* is derived from the verbal root '*mā*' in Sanskrit, meaning to 'measure out' or 'to limit'. Therefore, the technical term '*māyā*' is used in different Advaita Vedānta texts to denote that power which 'measures out' or limits.

The Advaita Śaivites use the term *māyā* to convey two different meanings in two different contexts. *Māyā* is used to denote that particular mode of divine *śakti* which He employs to conceal His true divine nature. It has therefore been rightly described in their texts as the power of obscuration (*tirodhāna*). It is said to accomplish the most difficult task (*durghaṭa vyāpāra*) of eclipsing His unrestricted power of divine freedom (*svātantrya*), the distinguishing characteristic of His divine nature (*aiśvarya*).[49] As a consequence of His using *māyā śakti* for self-concealment, He 'forgets' — as it were — His own divine nature. Unlike the Śāṅkara Vedāntins, the Advaita Śaivites do not admit the power of *vikṣepa* (projection) in *māyā*, which is rather assigned to the *kriyā śakti* of the supreme Lord.

Here, it may be pointed out that the Śāṅkara Vedāntins also speak about *māyā*'s power of veiling (*āvaraṇa śakti*), but they look upon *māyā* as a mysterious power operating in the *brahman* on the phenomenal plane, and as such it exists only phenomenally, and not absolutely. Conversely, the Advaita Śaivites consider the *māyā śakti* to be real and existent, being a mode of the supreme Lord's ceaselessly active divine *śakti*, the very power of divine freedom. It may be mentioned here that this fact is also supported by the Upaniṣads, which state that "the god Indra assumed diverse forms, exercising His power of *māyā*" (*Indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate*).

As a *tattva*, the term *māyā* signifies that level of creation on which the *māyā śakti* functions, marking the beginning of the era of limitation (*saṅkoca*), differentiation (*bheda*) and discreteness throughout the world-manifestation. *Māyā śakti* is also held to be the cause

[49] *Ibid*, V. 4 (com.).

of the monadic manifestation of the supreme Lord (*aṇurūpa*), in the form of limited subjects and objects at the level of *māyā tattva*.[50] The supreme Lord thereafter no longer experiences His universal nature (*viśvātmaka form*), but rather experiences an identity with objective self-manifestation (*idam*): duality (*dvaita*) under the influence of *māyā śakti* operating on this level of *māyā tattva*.

It is said that when the supreme Lord conceals His universal nature by operating *māyā śakti* (the power of concealment on the level of *māyā*),[51] His self-experience as the pure subject symbolized by *aham* is concealed. Simultaneous to this ceases His manifestation as a pure object as symbolized by *idam* in His self-experience. As a result of this, a vacuum is created within His self-experience. This vacuum is, however, short-lived, for arising therein is His self-experience as the object (now impure, due to limitation and concealment) as represented by the limited *idam*. Thereafter, the self-experience as *idam* splits up of its own accord, at the level of *māyā tattva*, resulting in the manifestation of two *idams* (representing two objects) in his self-experience. Since no worldly transaction can be carried out in the absence of a subject, the Advaita Śaivites hold that the supreme Lord superimposes the self-created conceptual notion (*vaikalpika*) subject or *aham* onto the experience of one of the two *idams*.[52] In this way, the supreme Lord restores parity to the experience of the limited subject and object.

Here it may be pointed out that the Advaita Śaivites hold the paradigm of a limited subject or a conceptual *aham* superimposed upon the *idam* to be an ontological fallacy, a false conceptualization (*vaikalpika*), and say it to be the root cause of intellectual ignorance (*bauddha ajñāna*) and bondage.[53] We shall take up this point later when we will discuss the nature of man in bondage.

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[50] *Paramārthasāra* V. 4 (com.).

[51] *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* V. 5 (com.).

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] *Īśvarapratyabhijñā Kārikā* III, 1, 7.

The five kañcukas, progeny of Māyā śakti

The Advaita Śaivas hold that the supreme Lord has five characteristic signs of His divine nature: omnipotence (*sarva kartṛtva*), omniscience (*sarvajñātva*), fullness of nature (*pūrṇatva*), eternality (*nityatva*), freedom (*svātantrya*) and pervasiveness (*vyāpakatva*). When the *māyā śakti* enwraps the supreme Lord in order to conceal His divine Nature, she is not alone in obscuring His divine nature: her progeny of five *kañcukas* or sheaths, existing and operating within the sphere of *māyā*, accomplish this task by eclipsing these five specific characteristics. This has been described by the Advaita Śaiva texts in the following manner.[54]

Over the course of His involution, when the supreme Lord enters the sphere of *māyā* and is enwrapped by the obscuring power of *māyā śakti*, His omnipotence (*sarvakartṛtva*) is eclipsed by the covering, or *kañcuka*, called *kalā*. The *kalā kañcuka* limits only His omnipotence, as result of which His power of unrestricted authorship or agency is curbed and changed into a limited power of authorship. He moves about in this world of multiplicity and discreteness as limited subjects, each possessing a limited power of authorship.

His omniscience is simultaneously eclipsed by *vidyā kañcuka*, when He, in the form of limited subjects, appears as possessing merely limited knowledge about a few things or objects of knowledge. In this limited form, He no longer knows everything about everything.

His fullness-nature is also simultaneously covered by the sheath called *rāga kañcuka*, whereafter He experiences a deficiency or want within Himself. The limited subject then develops a craving for obtaining only certain objects for enjoyment. They develop within themselves a feeling of attraction or attachment (*rāga*) towards such objects; this is why it is called *rāga kañcuka*.

Outside the sphere of *māyā*, the supreme Lord has the experience of being beyond time, and therefore immutable. Enveloped by *māyā*, in the form of limited subjects, He feels Himself to be subject to time

[54] *Ibid,* III, 1, 8 (Com).

and mutation. This is on account of the *kañcuka* called *kālā*, which reduces Him to the level of limited beings, from immutable to mutable, subject to change, decay and death.[55]

The supreme Lord is the all-pervasive divine being endowed with unrestricted divine freedom. Neither is He subject to any restriction, nor are His activities governed by the laws of cause and effect. He is all-pervasive space. However, when His divine nature is covered by *māyā* and He is deprived of His freedom by the sheath called *niyati* (indicating 'being fixed to a limited space'), such restrictions of time overwhelm Him. He 'becomes' a poor, limited creature, robbed of all His divine powers, moving about inside creation in a pitiable condition as *saṁsārin* (a mundane, transmigratory creature).

Puruṣa

Enwrapped by *māyā śakti* (the power of obscuration) and veiled by her progeny of five *kañcukas* (eclipsing His divine powers), the supreme Lord becomes manifest as limited subjects called *puruṣas* at the level of existence below the *māyā tattva*. *Puruṣas* are many in number due to their being self-contracted. The Advaita Śaivas do not advance any logical reason to prove the plurality of *puruṣa*, as this is only a logical corollary to the form of their monad.[56]

Puruṣas are limited sentient subjects or knowers (*mita pramātā*), and they are called *sakalas* when they are equipped with a physical body. It is said that the supreme Lord passes through the sphere of *māyā* after voluntarily beginning His self-contraction, which results in His becoming a spiritual monad (*cidaṇu*); over the course of his involution, the seeds of *karma* (*karmabīja*) created during the previous cycle of creation remain floating in the sphere of *māyā*, and these seeds are said to cling to the *cidaṇus*, one seed each. This determines the kind of physical body with which each *cidaṇu* will be equipped.

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[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.* III, 1, 9 (com.).

This happens only at the time of the first creative cycle (*prathama-sṛṣṭi-kalpa*). Once *puruṣas* assume physical bodies and become *sakalas*, they earn — and accumulate — residual impressions of *karma* (deeds) performed by them subsequently in creation.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the dualist Sāṁkhya and Pātañjali Yoga schools also speak about *puruṣas* as one of the two ultimate metaphysical realities. If we compare and contrast the nature of the *puruṣa* conceptualized in the Sāṁkhya and Yoga schools with that of the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir, we notice only a few points of resemblance, but many differences. For instance, both schools admit *puruṣas* as sentient (*cetana*) and multiple in number. It is for their enjoyment and liberation that *prakṛti* evolves and manifests the world.

Except for these two points of similarity in the nature of *puruṣa* admitted by both schools, there are many points of divergence. The Sāṁkhya Yoga schools look upon *puruṣas* to be eternally existent, immutable finite beings, existing independently and apart from *prakṛti*. They say that the *puruṣas* are all-pervasive in nature. Being of the nature of consciousness, the *puruṣas* shine with self-effulgent light (*prakāśa*). By their inherent nature, they watch with disinterest the activities of *prakṛti*.

The Advaita Śaivas conceptualise the *puruṣas* to be the self-contracted form of Śiva. As such, they are not eternally existent nor do they have any independent status in creation. They appear in creation only during the unfolding of the supreme Lord's immanent form. The *puruṣas* exist only in creation; they cease to exist when the supreme Lord 'withdraws into Himself' the whole of creation during the cosmic dissolution. The *puruṣas* are subject to limitations of time and space and causality, following the supreme Lord's covering Himself with the *kañcukas* provided by *māyā śakti*, in the form of the *kalā* and *niyati śaktis*.

According to the Advaita Śaiva School, *puruṣas* possess limited powers of will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*), due to the activity of two other *kañcukas*, *kalā* and *vidyā*.[57]

Though *puruṣas* are held to be of the nature of consciousness, they are neither self-conscious nor self-aware, having forgotten their true nature after being enveloped by *māyā*.

Prakṛti

Below the level of *māyā*, simultaneous to the manifestation of the *puruṣas*, the activity of *māyā śakti* causes *prakṛti* to become manifest. It is held by the Advaita Śaivites that *puruṣas* — representing the supreme experience on the level below *māyā tattva* — have vague experience of 'something' as their objects of experience (*vedya*). This 'something' which appears in the mirror of the subject is none other than *māyā*, which takes the form of the objects of the *puruṣas*' experience, as it were. As the *puruṣas* on that level and in that state are said to be 'asleep', in the absence of any 'real' object of experience, the experience of *māyā* as their object remains undefined and vague to them. The *māyā* in the form of objects which appears as 'something' to the *puruṣas* is given the name *prakṛti*.[58]

In his *Tantrāloka* (Ah. IX), Abhinavagupta pointed out that *prakṛti* is the 'barest' objectivity, in contrast with *puruṣa*, the subject (*vedaka*) (*vedyamātraṁ sphuṭaṁ bhinnaṁ pradhāna sūyate kalā*). *Prakṛti* has thereby been conceptualized as the gross form of the divine *śakti* — precisely speaking, *māyā śakti* — which had contracted to appear before the *puruṣas* as their object of knowledge.

Prakṛti is conceived by the Advaita Śaivas to be multiple in number, with one *prakṛti* serving each individual *puruṣa*, providing him everything he needs for his enjoyment. In this context, 'everything' means their physical body, equipped with the instruments of cognition and sensation, and different objects for experience and enjoyment. It may be mentioned here that, by conceiving both *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as being many in number, the Advaita Śaivas seem to avoid the logical problem which the Sāṁkhya and Yoga systems

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[57] *Ibid.*

[58] Cf. *ibid,* III, 1, 10 (Com.), p. 239.

face, namely how can one *prakṛti* simultaneously serve a multiplicity of *puruṣas* and provide each with the means and objects for its enjoyment?

The nature of *prakṛti* is admitted by all schools to be the equipoise of three *guṇas*. The term '*guṇa*' does not signify an 'attribute', but rather the constituents of *prakṛti*. The three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are likened to three strands constituting a piece of rope; hence the three *guṇas* can be labelled as the constituents (*svarūpādhayaka tattvas*) of *prakṛti*. Unlike the Sāṁkhya and Yoga schools, who hold the *guṇas* to be the triad of *prakṛti*'s constituent elements, the Advaita Śaivas conceive them to be the three modes of activity of the divine *śakti* — that is, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā* — but in a contracted form (*saṅkucita*). The *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* explains the nature of the three *guṇas* as conceptualized by the Advaita Śaivas in this manner: on becoming contracted, the power of knowledge (*jñānaśakti*) of the supreme Lord takes the form of *sattva guṇa*, His power of will (*icchāśakti*) appears as *rajas guṇa*, and His *kriyā śakti* takes the form of *tamas guṇa* within *prakṛti*.[59]

It may be mentioned here that, by conceptualizing the three *guṇas* as the divine *śakti* in a contracted form, the Advaita Śaivites are better able to explain the homogenous and heterogeneous modifications of the *guṇa*s which proceeds ceaselessly in *prakṛti*. They are also better able to answer the questions of why *sattva guṇa* is held to be the 'revealer' of objects (*prakāśaka*), why *rajas* is associated with incessant activity (*calam*), and so on.

It is held by the Advaita Śaiva school that the contracted form of the *icchāśakti* is responsible for the manifestation of subjects, the *jñāna śakti* for organs of knowledge and action, and the *kriyā śakti* for five subtle elements (*tanmātra*). They also hold the belief that, when the three contracted *śaktis* — appearing as the *guṇas sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* — operate while staying in a state of equilibrium (*sāmarasya*), there is no creation or emergence of any *tattvas* from

[59] *Ibid.*

prakṛti at that time. But when, over the course of involution (*avaroha*), the equipoise of the *guṇas* is disturbed (*guṇakṣobha*), then the *tattvas* within the bosom of *prakṛti*, the mother creatrix, begin emerging from her. Unlike the philosophers of Sāṁkhya — who think that the proximity of *puruṣa* to *prakṛti* is the efficient cause of this disturbance — the Advaita Śaivas hold that the supreme Lord's will for involution is the efficient cause for the manifestation of the *tattvas*, with the result of the manifestation of the world in its gross form.

Instruments of cognition

Impelled by the will (*icchā*) of the supreme Lord for His self-manifestation as the world, *prakṛti* causes to manifest the instruments of cognition inside the psychophysical bodies of the *puruṣas*. These are of two kinds, the internal instruments of cognition, called *citta* or *antaḥkaraṇa*, and the external instruments of sense cognition and action, or the *bahiṣkaraṇa*. The internal instruments of cognition are threefold — *buddhi* (intelligence), *ahaṁkāra* (the limited egoity) and *manas* (*mind*), manifested by *prakṛti* in that sequence — and the external instruments of cognition and action are tenfold.

Buddhi (intelligence)

While predominant with *sattva guṇa*, the contracted power of knowledge or *jñāna śakti*, *prakṛti* manifests the *buddhi* (intelligence) in the *puruṣa* as its instrument for determinate cognition.[60] As a rule, a product always bears the same nature as its material cause; since the *buddhi* has *jñāna śakti* or *sattva guṇa* dominating its nature, it is a part of the embodied *puruṣa*'s psychophysical body responsible for producing knowledge for it. Just as the consciousness-mirror is the locus for self-experience by the supreme Lord on every level of existence within the domain of pure creation, in the same way is the *buddhi* the locus for every experience of the *puruṣa*, which functions as the subject within the sphere of *prakṛti*.

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[60] *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha* V. 13-14 (com.).

Ahaṁkāra (egoity)

Ahaṁkāra, or egoity, is produced by *prakṛti* with *icchā śakti* contracted into *rajas guṇa* dominant in it. *Ahaṁkāra* is the instrument for discharging the task of what may be called the self-arrogation of appropriation (*abhimāna*) which enables the *puruṣa*, the limited subject existing in an embodied form, to have the feeling of a personal ego. This experience of ego by an embodied *puruṣa* is different from the 'I-experience' (*aham bodha*) of pure subjects existing on different levels in the pure sphere of divine *śakti*, and different too from the *pūrṇāhamtā* experience of the supreme Lord. This will be discussed later.

The Advaita Śaivas hold that *puruṣas* are 'awakened' (as it were) from 'sleep' by *prakṛti* through their association with *ahaṁkāra*. Prior to being equipped with *ahaṁkāra*, the *puruṣa* was oblivious of its personal identity; hence, it was asleep. It wakes upon being endowed with an *ahaṁkāra*. An *ahaṁkāra* is considered to be indispensable for a *puruṣa* to participate within the world.

Manas (mind)

With *kriyā śakti* contracted into *tamoguṇa*, *prakṛti* creates *manas* or mind, with *ahaṁkāra* serving as its material cause. *Manas* is an important constituent in the psycho-physical body of every embodied *puruṣa*, serving as an instrument for rationality (*saṅkalpa-vikalpa*), due to its predominance of *kriyā śakti*.[61]

Manas is also held responsible for supervising or controlling the activities of the external instruments of knowledge and action.

The external instruments of knowledge and action

Jñānendriyas (the organs of knowledge)

Within the individual physical body of each embodied *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* creates the organs of knowledge and action from their *ahaṁkāra* (egoity). These organs are primarily of the nature of powers

[61] *Ibid.*

or capacities which are employed within the physiological realm: these organs are used within the perview of specific fields of knowledge, or to perform specific functions. In this way, they have serve the embodied *puruṣas*.

For example, the five powers of sense-perception — of smelling, tasting, seeing, feeling of touch and hearing — exist respectively in the appropriate physiological organ: of the nose (*ghrāṇendriya*), the tongue (*jihvā*), the eyes (*cakṣus*), the skin (*tvacā*) and the ears (*karṇa*); these five powers of sense-perception operate through them and thereby collect sense-data about external objects, passing all data to the *buddhi* through the *ahaṁkāra* and the *manas*.[62] From this comes determinate knowledge to the *buddhi*.

It may be mentioned that realists (like the students of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools) define the external organs of knowledge only in terms of those capacities that operate through the various physiological sense-organs to collect sense-data in specific spheres: the eyes are said to only sieze form (*rūpa*), the *rasanendriya* within the tongue can only grasp taste, and so on. Every school of Indian philosophy concurs with this view.

The question raised by some schools as to whether or not the operation of these sense-organs of knowledge involves any physical contact with their respective objects of knowledge (called *vastuprāpya prakāśakarī*) has not been raised in the philosophy of Advaita Śaiva.

Motor organs (karmendriyas)

Advaita Śaivas hold that *prakṛti*, the creative mother, creates the various motor organs within the physical body of every embodied *puruṣa* in the same manner as with the organs of knowledge, and thus provides them with the means to enjoy external objects. The five motor organs are *vāk* (the power of speech), *pāṇi* (the power to grasp or hold objects of experience), *pāda* (the power of locomotion), *pāyu* (the power of excretion) and *upastha* (the power of sexual

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[62] *Ibid*, v.15; *Iśvarapratyabhijñākārika* V. 1; II (com.).

gratification and restfulness) which function through the physiological organs of the mouth, the hand, the legs, the anus and the sex organs, respectively.[63]

Material objects of experience — tanmātrās

Those material objects experienced by embodied *puruṣas* are twofold: made from subtle material elements (*tanmātrās*) as well as from gross material elements (*mahābhūtas*). *Ahaṁkāra* is the material cause for the manifestation of the *tanmātrās* which, again, are the material causes for the gross material elements.

The term '*tanmātrā*' literally means 'that only'. The *tanmātrās* are 'unalloyed' primary material elements, too subtle to be perceived by the *jñānendriyas* of ordinary people; only yogins can grasp them, through the extraordinary qualities of their sense-organs. These are fivefold: *śabda tanmātrā* (sound-as-such), *sparśa tanmātrā* (touch-as-such) *rūpa tanmātrā* (form-as-such) *rasa tanmātrā* (taste-as-such) and *gandha tanmātrā* (odour-as-such).

These elements are too subtle to be able to exist independently within creation. It is therefore held that the *tanmātrās* are only known to exist eternally within the five gross material elements, as their cause.[64] It is held that a cause is always subtly present in its effect, as its precedent; cause always pervades the effect.

Mahābhūtas (the gross physical elements)

The five material elements (*mahābhūtas)* are each produced from one of the five *tanmātrās*: the *ākāśa* (ether) *mahābhūta* is produced from the subtle material element *śabda tanmātrā*, *vāyu* (air) from *sparśa tanmātrā*, *tejas* (fire) from *rūpa tanmātrā*, *apas* (water) from *rasa tanmātrā* and *pṛthvī* (earth) from *gandha tanmātrā*. Cause and effect are always seen to exist inseparably fused together; therefore, the cause is held to be present in a very subtle form within whichever

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[63] *Ibid,* V. 14; *ibid.*

[64] *Ibid,* V. 15.

effect follows it. For this, the *tanmātrās* are said to be always present in the *mahābhūtas* in a causal form.

All gross material objects, including the gross physical bodies of embodied beings, are made from the *mahābhūtas*. The gross objects of experience are also constituted by the *mahābhūtas*.[65]

This completes the description of the process of the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the universe of thirty-six *tattvas*.

9. Classification of the world-manifestations under the *kalās*; the *bhuvanas* contained therein

In the *Tantrasāra*, Abhinavagupta classifies the entire range of worldly manifestations under five categories pertaining to the *kalās*, phases of the divine *śakti* manifested as the world, divided with regards to qualities of their respective *tattvas*. They are *śāntyātīta kalā*, *śāntā kalā*, *vidyā kalā*, *pratiṣṭhā kalā* and *nivṛtti kalā*.[66] Abhinavagupta gives the topmost position in the hierarchy of the *kalās* to the *śāntyātīta kalā*. This division contains of two *tattvas*, *śiva* and *śakti*, which are both eternal, co-existing outside creation. No *bhuvanas* (mini-worlds) exist within this sphere.

Below the *śāntyātīta kalā* lies the *śāntā kalā*, comprised of three levels of existence: *śuddha vidyā*, *īśvara* and *sadāśiva tattvas*, along with 18 *bhuvanas* (mini-worlds). The *vidyā kalā* occupies third position in the descending order of *kalās*, which is comprised of seven levels of worldly existence: *māyātattva*, her spawn of five *kañcukas*, and *puruṣa*. Twenty-eight *bhuvanas* are said to exist within this division of world manifestation. The *pratiṣṭhā kalā*, comprised of 23 levels of existence from *prakṛti tattva* to *jala tattva*, lies below the *vidyā kalā*. This division also contains 56 *bhuvanas*. The *nivṛtti kalā* occupies the lowest position in the hierarchy of *kalās*, consisting of the *pṛthvī tattva* and 16 *bhuvanas*. *Parama* Śiva, the supreme Lord, transcends all *kalās*.

The total number of *bhuvanas* within this five-*kalā* hierarchy is 118.[67]

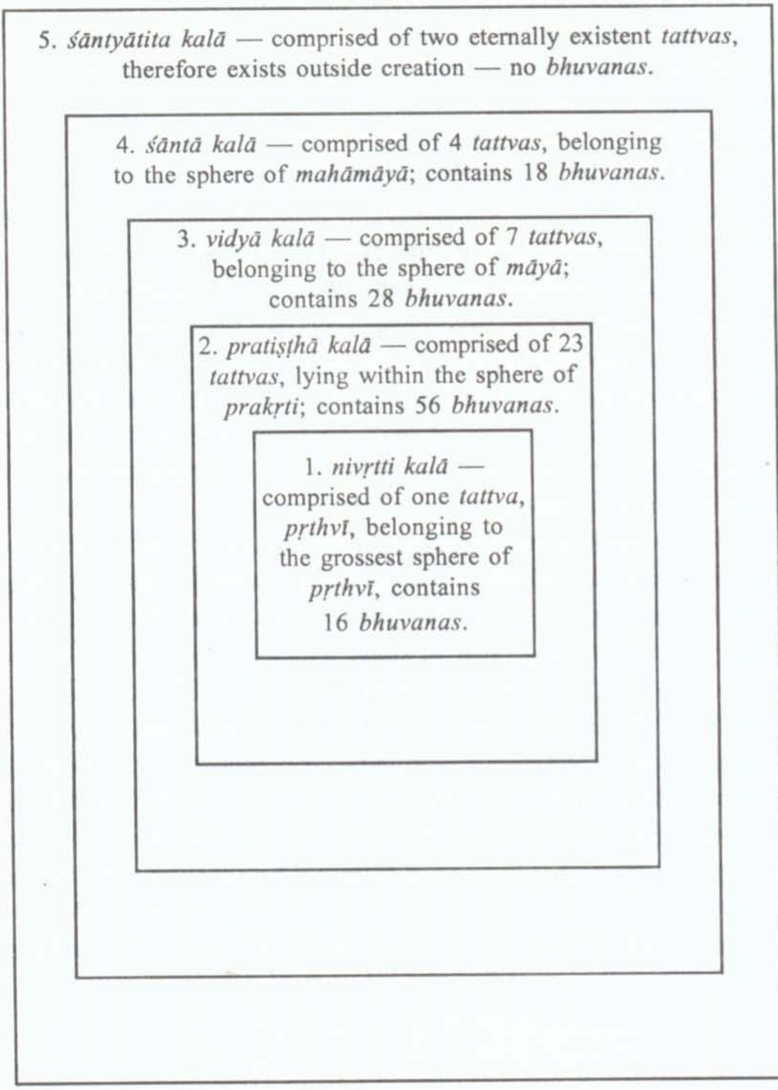
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[65] *Ibid*, V. 16.

[66] *Ibid*, V. 17.

[67] *Ibid*, V. 18.

Diagram showing the world-manifestation classified under the five *kalās,* and the number of *bhuvanas* (mini-worlds) contained therein.



Explanation — This diagram shows the *kalās*, comprised of the various levels of creation (*tattvas*) and the number of *bhuvanas* (mini-worlds) contained within each, arranged in an ascending order. Total number of *tattvas*: 36; *bhuvanas*: 118.

1. *Nivṛtti kalā* — the grossest sphere of manifestation, comprised of one *tattva* (*pṛthvī tattva*) and 16 *bhuvanas*.
2. *Pratiṣṭhā kalā* — the gross sphere of manifestation, comprised of 23 *tattvas* (four *mahābhutas*, five *tanmātrās*, the eleven sense faculties of knowledge and action, *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra* and *prakṛti*, the creative mother of all these other *tattvas*) and 56 *bhuvanas*.
3. *Vidyā kalā* — comprised of 7 *tattvas* (*māyā*, the five *kañcukas* and *puruṣa*) and 28 *bhuvanas*.
4. *Śāntā kalā* — Comprised of 3 *tattvas* (*śuddha vidyā*, *īśvara* and *sadāśiva tattvas*) and 18 *bhuvanas*.
5. *Śāntyātita kalā* — Comprised of only two *tattvas* (*śakti* and *śiva*, two eternal *tattvas* lying outside creation) and no *bhuvanas*.

~Chapter IV~

THE NATURE OF MAN AND HIS STATUS IN THE WORLD-MANIFESTATION

1. Introductory remarks

As opposed to Western philosophy, which is speculative in character, being more inclined to discuss abstract metaphysical principles which have no direct bearing on man's everyday life, the outlook of Indian philosophy is generally more pragmatic. Indian philosophy focuses on man, the axis of creation — such topics as his nature, his position in creation, his present state of existence in the world and his ultimate destiny are of great concern to Indian philosophers. This, every school of Indian philosophical thought pays much attention to understanding his real nature *vis-à-vis* his status in the world. The Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir is no exception to this trend. In this chapter shall be examined the nature of man as an empirical being, his status in the world-creation, his true nature, as well as the modes of spiritual discipline needed to realise his true nature.

It has been observed in the foregoing chapter that philosophers of the Advaita Śaiva school of Kashmir, despite their being staunch advocates of the philosophy of non-dualism (*advaita*), look upon the world as being real and existent. Man, constituting an integral part of the world-manifestation, is also said to be real, on account of his being the self-manifested form of the supreme being, created on account of His own free will. As a logical corollary to the reality of man in the world, the Advaita Śaivites further hold that all human beings have an independent existence and possess a distinct personality

of their own in the world. This conception of man, unique in the history of Advaita thought, has many implications which shall become clear over the course of our discussing man's nature and status in creation as seen by the Advaita Śaiva writers.

2. Different types of subjects (*pramātā*) and the variable nature of their experiences

Advaita Śaiva texts talk about seven kinds of experients or subjects, including human beings, which exist on the various levels of the world-creation. It is a revolutionary concept, not found in the metaphysical thought of any other school of Indian philosophy. It may be recalled from the previous chapter that Śaiva texts use the term *tattva* to signify both a component of creation as well as a level of creation on which different kinds of experients are believed to stay.

Utpaladeva in his *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*, as well as Abhinavagupta in his *Vimarśinī* commentary on this text, both talk about seven distinct kinds of experients who are said to exist on the different levels of creation, broadly classified into three spheres: the pure sphere of creation, in which the divine *śakti* in the form of *cit śakti* operates, technically called the *śuddha adhva* (the pure realm, of spirit); the impure sphere of creation called the *aśuddha adhva* (the impure realm, of material) in which the divine *śakti* dominates in a subtle yet impure form (herein known as *jaḍa śakti*); and the region between these two realms, which may be called the *śuddhāśuddha adhva* (the pure-*cum*-impure realm).

The seven catgories of experients, arranged in descending order, are those of the *śuddha adhva*: *śiva pramāta* (on the level of *śiva tattva*), *mantramaheśvara* (within *īśvara tattva*), *mantreśvara* (within *śuddha vidyā*); of the *śuddhāśuddha adhva*: *mantra* (below the *śuddha vidyā tattva*) and *vijñānākala* (in the *māyā tattva*); and of the *aśuddha adhva*: *pralayākala* (on the level of *prakṛti tattva*) and *sakala* (below the *prakṛti tattva*).[68]

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[68] *Īśvarapratyābhijñākārikā* (Utpala), III, 1, 2, pp. 217 ff; *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, sū 3. Also see the table.

In this context, it will be pertinent to describe the defilements (*mala*) postulated in the Advaita Śaiva texts which play a crucial role in defining these different kinds of experients. The three kinds of defilements are the *āṇava mala*, the *māyīyamala* and the *kārma mala*.[69] The Advaita Śaiva writers postulate that the supreme Lord, in order to play different roles (*bhūmikā*) within His self-manifestation as the world, dons the defilements one over another and manifests Himself within the various kinds of experients. As he does so, His divine nature as the supreme being is concealed, and as a result, He 'forgets' His true, divine nature; simultaneously, He is bound by different kinds of fetters (*pāśas*) as he manifests. It is said that in this way, the supreme Lord voluntarily choses to become *paśu* (fettered beings),[70] forsaking His real nature as the *Pati* (the Lord) in order to actively participate in the staging of the world drama, and to thereby experience delight (*ānanda*).

Āṇavamala is said to be the basic defilement (*mūlamala*) which arises directly from the supreme Lord's imposition of limitation (*saṅkoca*) on Himself. It has the form of self-contraction (*ātma-saṅkoca*), which comes into being for the first time at the time of the manifestation of the universe. As the supreme Lord covers Himself with this self-created *āṇavamala*, He becomes contracted, appearing as an infinite number of spiritual monads (*cidaṇu*). The process of self-contraction (*saṅkoca*) begins once He descends to the *sadāśiva* level as a *mantramaheśvara* over the course of His involution (*avaroha*), having been deprived of His absolute nature due to the activity of the divine *śakti* in its phase of negation (*niṣedha*) at the level of *śakti tattva*.

The Advaita Śaiva writers describe the supreme Lord's nature to be characterized by infinite knowledge or awareness (*bodha*) and unrestricted freedom of action (*kriyā*), both coalesced together. As the supreme Lord contracts, these two aspects of His integral nature

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[69] *Ibid*, III, 2, 4-5 pp 248 ff.

[70] For meaning of the term *paśu*, see *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā Vimarśinī* p. 247.

get split, as it were, and become limited in two different ways. In his *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Kārikā*,[71] Utpaladeva mentions two distinct kinds of *āṇavamala*, one veiling only the awareness aspect of his nature, the other curbing the freedom (*svātantrya*) aspect of his divine nature, once contracted into a monad. As a consequence, two distinct kinds of spiritual monads (*cidaṇu*) are created, one which is not aware of its divine nature, but possessing His freedom of action unaffected by the limitations of *āṇavamala*, the other with His awareness intact, but bereft of His freedom of action.

The experients (*pramātā*) which abide on the levels of *sadāśiva*, *īśvara* and *śuddha vidyā tattvas*, as well as the *vijñānakalas* which stay on the level just below the *śuddha vidyā* yet above *māyā tattva*, are all said to be covered by the second kind of *āṇavamala*.[72] These experients possess the awareness (*bodha*) of their nature as before, unaffected by the self-created contraction in them. Since these experients are bereft of the freedom (*svātantrya*) of their true nature, they are forced to stay fixed within their position in the realm of *mahāmāyā* but above *māyā*; they cannot ascend or descend. (Please refer to the table next page).

[71] *Op. cit.*, pp. 248 f.

[72] *Ibid.*

Table showing the nature and status of every experient or subject, with the objects of its experience

No. Tattva	Experient	Object of experience
1. *śiva* Presiding deity: Śiva	*śiva pramātā*	the entire universe, in the form of illumination
2. *sadāśiva tattva* (with the *icchā* aspect of the divine *śakti* dominating) Presiding deity: Sadāśiva Bhaṭṭāraka	*mantra maheśvara* the self-experience as 'I' is clear without any corresponding object of experience	the universe lying submerged and therefore void (as it were) within the self-experience of the experient, *mantra maheśvara*
3. *Iśvara tattva* (with the *jñāna* aspect of the divine *śakti* dominant) Presiding deity: Īśvara Bhaṭṭāraka	*mantreśvara*	the self-experience as 'I' (*aham*) and the experience of the universe as an object (thisness or *idam*) shining unequally distinct within the self-experience of the experient
4. *śuddha vidyā tattva* (with the *kriyā* aspect of the divine *śakti* dominant) Presiding deity: Anantabhaṭṭaraka	*mantra*	the self-experience as I (*aham*) becoming indistinct; the experience of the universe (thisness or *idam*) shining prominently in the self-experience of the experient
5. the level below *śuddha vidyā tattva* but above *māyā tattva*	*vijñānākala* (has knowledge of his being but is devoid of agency; associated with *āṇavamalas*)	has an overview of *pralayākalas* and *sakalas*
6. *māyā tattva*	*pralayākala* or *śunya pramātā* is covered by *āṇava* and *māyīya malas*	void: no experience of any object, no self-experience
7. All the *tattvas* from *prakṛti* up to *pṛthvī tattva*	*sakala* possesses a physical body; includes every being, from *devatās* to plants etc., which are covered by all three *malas*	they have an ego-experience as their self-experience. The self is seen as different from the objects, as well as from one another

The spiritual monads who are covered by the first kind of *āṇavamala* — veiling their divine aspect of awareness (*bodha*) while leaving leaving their freedom intact — are the *pralayākalas*, who exist on the level of *prakṛti* in the *aśuddha adhva*, and the *sakalas* who exist on the different levels of existence in creation below the level of *prakṛti*.

In short, the *mantramaheśvara*, *mantreśvara mantra* and *vijñāna-kalas*, existing respectively on the level of the *tattvas* — *sadāśiva*, *īśvara* and the *śuddhavidyā* as well as below the *śuddhavidyā tattva* but above *māyā tattva*, are said to be wrapped by the second kind of *āṇavamala*, while the *pralayākalas* and the *sakalas* are held to be covered by the first kind of *āṇavamala*. *Śiva pramātā*, existing on the level of *śiva tattva*, is totally free from defilement of any kind; as a matter of fact, he is the one, eternal existent on the level of *śiva tattva* on account of His remaining outside creation. He is the highest kind of *pramātā*.

The Advaita Śaivas conceive *māyā śakti* as being the power of concealment (*tirodhāna śakti*) which operates on the stratum just below the level of *śuddhavidyā tattva* in the *aśuddha adhva* realm of impure creation. As the supreme Lord in the form of spiritual monads enters the course of involution down to the sphere of *māyā* (called *māyāṇḍa* by Abhinavagupta), these monads are enveloped by *māyā*; in this context, it is known as *māyīyamala*, being the defilement caused by concealing power of *māyā*. As a consequence of this, the divine nature of these monads becomes fully eclipsed; they forget themselves. *Māyā* is not alone in performing this task of concealment; she is aided by her progeny of five *kañcukas* to hide the divine nature of the spiritual monads, otherwise characterised by omnipotence, omniscience, omni-presence and the like. The Advaita Śaiva texts [73] describe the manner in which the five *kañcukas* curb the divinity of the monads, through transforming these divine powers into limited ones. For example, the *kalākañcuka* enwrapping the spiritual monads reduces their

[73] *Ṣaṭtriṁśattattva Sandoha*, V. 8-11 with com. thereon; *Pratyabhijñā Hṛdayam*, Sū 7.

omnipotence into a limited power of agency; the *vidyā kañcuka* reduces their omniscience to a limited power of knowledge; the *rāga kañcuka* robs them of their fullness-nature and generates a feeling of want, followed by a feeling of attachment. The *kālakañcuka* employs bonds of time and space to fetter the monads, who otherwise were beyond time and space (*kāla* and *deśa*) and therefore were not subject to mutation, decay or death; the monads then become prey to change and destruction. These monads normally also exist outside the purview of relationships of cause and effect, but when they are covered by *niyati kañcuka*, they become subject to these, as well.

The *māyīyamala* enveloping the *cidaṇus* not only makes them oblivious of their real natures, but also robs them of all signs of their divinity. As a consequence, deprived of their divine powers, the monads are reduced to being mundane, fettered creatures, undergoing endless transmigration.[74] While all six kinds of bound experients are bound by *āṇavamala*, only the *pralayākalas* and the *sakalas* are additionally veiled by *māyīyamala*.

It may be mentioned here that the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*[75] also speaks about five kinds of veils (*kośas*) within *māyā*'s power of concealment, hiding the true nature of the *ātman* (self). Listed in the order of their intrinsicality, they are the *ānandamaya kośa*, the *vijñānamaya kośa*, the *prāṇamaya kośa*, the *manomaya kośa* and the *annamaya kośa*. At a first glance, the two concepts of five *kañcukas* and five *kośas* might appear identical, but they are actually rather dissimilar. The nature of *māyā* in Advaita Śaiva thought is real and existent, on account of its being a mode of the divine *śakti*'s activity on the lower level of existence. The nature of *māyā* in Śaṅkara's Vedānta is relatively real on the mundane plane, yet unreal on the trans-empirical plane. In the Advaita Śaiva thought, the *kañcukas* are real, and they accomplish the task of ensnaring the monads by limiting their divine powers of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and

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[74] *Īśvarapratyabhijñā Kārikā Vim.*, III, 2, 4-5 pp. 248-9.

[75] *Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Brahmānandavallī* Anu 2-5.

the like. The *kośas* are only phenomenally real, and they serve the mere purpose of hiding the true nature of the self. Along with *māyā*, they disappear upon one's realising one's true essence. But the *kañcukas* do not disappear when an individual realises their Śiva-nature; they only stop ensnaring that single, individual being.

Kārmamala is the third kind of defilement admitted by the Advaita Śaiva school; is held responsible for providing a physical body for the *cidaṇus*. It is said to be the product of the collective residual impressions of every action performed by an embodied being over a particular cycle of creation, carried forward to the next cycle. It is said that, as embodied beings perform actions during their life-time, some residual impressions are produced and stored within their intellects; these determine the course of their future lives. When there is cosmic dissolution (*pralaya*) at the end of a cycle of creation, the embodied individual beings perish, and their intellects also get dissolved — but the residual impressions that could be not exhausted during their last lifetime do not get destroyed; condensed, they continue to exist, like molecules of matter embedded within the divine *śakti*. When the cosmic dissolution comes to end, resulting in a fresh cycle of creation, the divine *śakti* again unfurls herself on the three strata as *mahāmāyā*, *māyā* and *prakṛti*; the embedded residual impressions reappear within the sphere of *māyā*. As the monads descend into the sphere of *māyā* over the course of their involution, the condensed residual empressions cling to them, one by one. These are refered to as *kārma mala*, providing them with the corresponding physical bodies, and thereby ensnaring them further, forcing them to undergo more transmigrations (*saṁsaraṇa*).[76] The embodied individuals 'created' this way are known as the *sakalas*.

Out of the seven kinds of *pramātā* mentioned in the Advaita Śaiva texts, only the lower six types are covered by *āṇava* defilement. The *mantramaheśvara* experients exist on the level of *sadāśiva tattva*; *mantreśvara* stay on the level of *īśvaratattva*, while *mantra* subsist

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[76] *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā Vim.* III, 2, 4-5 to pp. 248-49.

on the level of *śuddhavidyā tattva*. The experience of these experients is regarded as 'pure', as they live in the sphere of the divine *śakti* called *mahāmāyā*; in the words of Abhinavagupta, they belong to *śaktyaṇḍa*, the sphere of pure *śakti*. They are said to possess pure bodies made of divine *śakti* in a 'condensed form', technically called the *baindava deha* ('the body made from the *bindu*'). They come into existence upon the unfolding (*unmeṣa*) of the world-manifestation, and remain in that state until the cosmic dissolution, or *nimeśa*. All these *pramātā* remain fixed upon the level they happen to occupy; there is no scope for their elevation or descent. The reason for postulating that they possess pure bodies of divine *śakti* seems to be that they have the self-experience of '*aham*' distinct from any experience of *idam*. At that time, they remain aware of the non-difference (*abheda*) between the subject and objective consciousness. All these kinds of pure experients are said to execute the will of the supreme Lord, who only exercises His divine power through them. For this, it is necessary that the experients to be equipped with some kind body; in their case, they receive a pure body.

There is another way to look at the nature of the three pure (*śuddha pramātā*) experients called *mantramaheśvara*, *mantreśvara* and *mantra* besides from the point of view of their defilements; this is from the perspective of the nature of their self-experience (*parāmarśa*). As has already been indicated in a previous chapter, following the self-contraction upon the assumption of *āṇavamala*, the self-experience of all experients is bifurcated towards two poles, of *aham*, the subject or I-experience, and *idam*, the object. It must be pointed out that, while the subjective pole shines with a uniform brightness in the self-experience of these three pure experients (*śuddha pramātā*), the objective pole of *idam* is revealed in their experience with a variable brightness. As has already been indicated in the description of the nature of *tattvas*, the objective pole shines dimly (*dhyāmala*) in the self-experience of the *mantramaheśvara* at the *sadāśiva* level, and as brightly as the *aham* in the self-experience of the *mantreśvara*. The Advaita Śaiva describe this phenomenon with the analogy of the

two plates of a balance scale (*samadhrita tulānyāya*); *idam* gains so much prominence in the self-experience (*svātma parāmarśa*) of the *mantra* at the level of *śuddha vidyā tattva* that its shine almost conceals the *aham*, which disappears 'as it were' due to this veiling power of *māyā* (*tirodhāna kārī*). With the disappearance of the *aham* from the self-experience of the *pralayākala* experient which resides in the sphere of *māyā*, their experience of the objective *idam* also disappears. It is precisely for this reason that the *pralayākalas* are also called the *śūnya pramātā*, 'the experiencers of the void'.

The *vijñānakalas* belong to the category of 'impure' subjects for their staying below the level of *śuddha vidyā* but above the realm of *mahāmāyā*. They are covered by only one kind of defilement, the first kind of *āṇavamala*, depriving them of their natural, divine freedom (*svātantrya*). Their self-awareness aspect remains unaffected by their act of of self-limitation (*āṇavamala*); they remain immersed in their awareness-nature (*bodha*).[77] Being devoid of *kriyā śakti*, they can neither elevate themselves nor descend to lower levels; being unassociated with *kārmamala* since the beginning of the creative cycle, they have to remain unembodied for the entire duration.

As mentioned before, the *pralayākalas* are veiled by two kinds of defilements, the *āṇavamala* and the *māyīyamala*. They are said to exist, disembodied, on the level of *prakṛti*. Being devoid of any physical body, neither can they elevate themselves to a higher level of creation through personal effort, nor can they descend,[78] but are forced to remain fixed until the beginning of the next cycle of creation (*kalpa*).

Only *sakalas* (individual beings equipped with a gross physical body) are covered by three defilements of *āṇava*, *māyīya* and *kārma mala*. Their association with the *kārmamala* gives them each a gross physical body. They exist, embodied, on the various levels of creation in the sphere of *prakṛti* (*prakṛtyaṇḍa*), beginning with *buddhi* (intellect) extending down to the sphere of *pṛthvī* (*pṛthvyaṇḍa*),

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[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*

undergoing transmigration after death within the two spheres of *prakṛtyaṇḍa* and *pṛthvyaṇḍa*.[79]

It may be mentioned here that this kind of classification and description of six or seven types of percipient subjects is the unique contribution of the Advaita Śaivities to Indian spiritual thought. Seen from the point of view of the supreme Lord, these types of percipients represent the different roles (*bhūmikā*) assumed by the supreme experiencing being, *parama* Śiva, at the various levels of creation.

The Advaita Śaivites accept the Sāṁkhya School's classification of embodied (*sakala*), stating that all embodied beings equipped with gross physical bodies are either superhuman, human or subhuman (*daiva*, *mānuṣa* or *tiryag*, respectively).[80] The *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* (verse 53) further classifies them under fourteen subdivisions as follows: the superhuman beings are of eight kinds, belonging to the classes of *brāhmī*, *prajāpati*, *aindra*, *pitṛ*, *yakṣa*, *rākṣaṣa* and *paisāca*, arranged in a descending order.[81] They are believed to possess bodies suitable for enjoyment. Embodied beings in the *mānuṣa* (human) class are exclusively equipped with physical bodies suitable for performing actions (*karma*) on their own volition, on account of their being endowed with distinct ego-experiences (*ahaṁkāra*). The subhuman beings are fivefold: *paśu* (domesticated quadrupeds), *mṛga* (wild animals), *pakṣī* (birds), *sarisṛpa* (crawling animals like reptiles and the like) and *sthairva* (immovable insentient trees, creepers, and so on). These embodied beings are said to be endowed with physical bodies fit for suffering.

3. Advaita Śaiva views of embodied human beings, their nature, different kinds of bonds and body-garb

In the last chapter, it was mentioned that the Advaita Śaiva writers describe the act of world manifestation from the supreme Lord's point of view as His divine sport (*krīḍā*) which He performs out of

[79] Cf. *Paramārthasāra* (Abhinavagupta V. 4 Com. thereon).

[80] *Sāṁkhyakārīkā*, V. 40; *Tattvakaumudi* Com. thereon.

[81] *Ibid* V. 53.

His free and independent will in order to experience delight. It has been mentioned there that prior to His self-manifestation as the world, the supreme Lord remains immersed in His boundless Bliss nature; however, in order to externalize His bliss nature, like Naṭarāja (the supreme actor) He does to enact the world drama at a universal scale, in which He assumes different forms to participate in order to play every role (*bhūmikā*) at every level of creation.[82]

The supreme Lord cannot act as the subject-agent (*pramātā-kartā*) unless He wraps Himself with body-vesture. With this in mind, the Advaita Śaivites thereby admit different kinds of bodily garb or apparati for different kinds of subject-agents at the various levels of creation. To use the metaphorical language used by Advaita Śaiva writers to depict the creation of the world, the supreme Lord as Naṭarāja dons different cloaks to play the various roles of experient subjects in the world drama.

Broadly speaking, according to the Tantric tradition in general and Advaita Śaiva school in particular, the body-garb are of two kinds, namely *bhogadeha* (bodies fit to serve as vehicles for enjoyment) and *karmadeha* (bodies suitable for performance of actions). As has been already referred to in the previous section, the super-human embodied beings, which include three kinds of pure subjects (*mantreśvara*, *mantreśa* and *mantra*) are equipped with a pure kind of *bhogadeha*, made from 'condensed' divine *śakti*, as it were, technically called the *baindava deha*. Though these three kinds of pure experients possess pure bodies, they do not have an independent or separate existence from the supreme experiencer, the supreme Lord, nor do they possess any will of their own; they are said always to execute the will of the supreme Lord. As a matter of fact, the supreme Lord always and only functions through them. These pure experients also 'enjoy' while functioning as the agents of the supreme Lord.

The subhuman embodied beings are also said to be equipped with a *bhoga deha*, but their body-garb is of a different kind. Theirs is

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[82] Cf. *Śiva Sūtra* III, 39; *Vimarśini* thereon.

comprised of two distinct kinds of physical bodies, subtle (*sūkṣma*) within the gross (*sthula*) made of five gross material components called *sthūla bhūtas* (gross material elements). The composition of these two different kinds of body-garb will be examined later in the section.

The subhuman embodied beings lack any ego-feeling (*ahaṁ-kāra*) and the will to act, so all their activities are involuntary or mechanical; they only act guided by their instinct. Hence, regardless of whatever activities they perform, they do not have to suffer the consequences of their actions. Their activities are responses to external stimuli, or acts of fulfilment of the needs of their body-apparati.

Only embodied human beings are equipped with *karmadeha*, with physical bodies for the performance of voluntarily, conscious actions. They alone are endowed with ego-sense (*ahaṁkāra*); therefore, they perform actions voluntarily, with an awareness of what they do. Therefore human beings alone are subject to the laws of *karma*, to enjoy or suffer the fruits of their deeds. This, however, should not be regarded as unmitigated nuisance; it is a blessing in disguise. Embodied humans have the sole privilege and opportunity to realise their true Śiva-nature through their personal efforts, by cutting the bonds which fetter them. No other embodied being has this golden opportunity. Embodied human beings can also elevate themselves to higher levels of existence by performing spiritual discipline, if they so desire. It is precisely for this reason that scriptures laud the 'birth' of individuals into human forms.

Like some orthodox schools of Indian philosophy like Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Advaita Vedānta, Advaita Śaiva writers admit two distinct kinds of physical bodies existing one within the other. The internal body is subtle; this body is constituted by subtle elements, called *puryaṣṭaka* (*puri* = body; *aṣṭaka* = the group of eight elements) by Śaiva writers,[83] and *sūkṣma śarīra* (lit. 'subtle body') by all others.

[83] *Ibid*, III, 2, 3.

The eight elements which comprise the subtle body are said to be the fivefold vital breaths (*prāṇa*), the cognitive sense faculties (*jñānendriya*), the active faculties (*karmendriya*) and the intellect (*buddhi*); however, according to Abhinavagupta, the eight constituents of *puryaṣṭaka* are the five subtle elements (*pañca tanmātrā*), the mind (*manas*), the egoity (*ahaṁkāra*) and the intellect (*buddhi*).

It may be mentioned here by way of comparison that the Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Śāṇkara Vedāntins hold the subtle body to be made of seventeen and eighteen constituents respectively, namely thirteen sense faculties comprised of the threefold internal sense faculty (*antaḥkaraṇa*), the ten instruments of cognition and motor activity, and the five subtle elements (*pañca tanmātrās*). The Śāṇkara Vedāntins substitute these five *tanmātrā* with the five vital breaths.

The subtle body is also called *ātivāhika deha*, the body which carries the individual self from one gross physical body to another. Each spiritual monad (*cidaṇu*) belonging to the class of gross embodied beings (*sakala*) is provided with a subtle body of his own in the beginning of the cycle of creation of the world, which lasts until the cosmic dissolution, or until one obtains liberation. Irrespective of the class to which they belong, all *sakalas* are equipped with a subtle body of their own.

The gross physical body, technically called the *sthūla śarīra*,[84] is comprised of the five gross material elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth, respectively called *ākāṣa*, *vāyu*, *tejas*, *jala*, and *pṛthvī*. One gross body for each embodied being comes into existence as a result of the physical union of male and female beings. The gross body has a beginning, at the time of birth, and it comes to an end at the time of death; it is perishable in nature.

All *sakalas* must pass through endless cycles of birth and death over the course of the world manifestation; it only comes to an end at the time of cosmic dissolution.

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[84] *Ibid*, III, 2, 4.

4. Distinction between ego-experiences (*ahaṁkāra*) and the pure I-experience (*aham*)

In the foregoing section it has been stated that humans (*mānuṣa-sakala*) are privileged beings, as they exclusively are equipped with *karmadeha*. It has also been mentioned that the distinguishing characteristic of *karmadeha* is the egoity (*ahaṁkāra*), which confers on the power of limited will (*icchā*) and limited freedom of action (*kriyā*) with an awareness of what they do. In other words, embodied human beings alone are endowed with the limited power of agency (*kartṛtva*) and knowledge. Unlike some schools of Indian philosophy, the Advaita Śaivites do not look upon egoity as an evil that binds them in the web of *karma*, but rather as something which equips them with an instrument to cut every all fetters responsible for their being embodied *paśus*. At the same time, egoity is regarded as indispensable to carry out worldly actions at the mundane level.

Let us now discuss the nature of egoity as conceived in the Advaita Śaiva School. It may be mentioned here that many schools of Indian philosophical thought (such as the Sāṁkhya, the Pātañjala Yoga, Advaita Vedānta, and others) admit egoity (*ahaṁkāra*) as a component of the internal sense-faculties (*antaḥkaraṇa*) in every embodied human manifested from *prakṛti* or *māyā*. The *rajas guṇa* is said to be the dominant element within it (*ahaṁkāra*) which is responsible for forcing the embodied being to be active as a cognising subject (*pramātā*) and agent (*kartā*). Being the product of *prakṛti* or *māyā*, egoity is material (*jaḍa*) in nature.

The Advaita Śaivas also admit egoity as a product of *prakṛti*, therefore 'material' or insentient in nature (*jaḍa*). They add another dimension to its delineation, tracing its roots to the level of creation below the *śuddha vidyā* within the sphere of *māyā* (*māyāṇḍa*). It is said that as the *cidaṇus* are enveloped by *māyā*, which acts as the power of obscuration (*tirodhāna*). The self-experience by the spiritual monad as a pure subject (*śuddha ahaṁtā*) in the realm of *śuddha adhva* disappears on being covered by *māyā*, leaving the self-experience as *idam* (pure object) in them to be affected by the obscuring

power of *māyā*. As *māyā śakti* is not able to fully conceal the self-experience as *idam*, it strengthens the apparent split in the self-experience as 'this-ness' (*idam*) in the monads, in consonance with its nature responsible for producing experience of duality and discreteness (*bheda*). As a consequence of this, two *idams* are created in the self-experience of the *cidaṇu*. Since the monads cannot take part in the world in the absence of an subjective self-experience (*ahaṁ-pratīti*), the Advaita Śaiva writers postulate the creation in them of their self-experience as a limited subject (*mita ahaṁpratīti*), through the super-imposition of subjective self-experience (*ahaṁpratīti*) upon one of the two *idams*. This superimposition of *ahaṁpratīti* takes place in the *antaḥkaraṇa*, hence it is regarded as a conceptual, artificially-created thought construct (*vikalpa*).[85] Obviously, this self-experience which constitutes the foundation of egoity (*ahaṁkāra*) in the empirical plane is relatively false; therefore, it is subject to destruction.

The Advaita Śaivas postulate yet another kind of self-experience in all *cidaṇus*, which they call the pure I-experience (*śuddha ahaṁtā*). It is said that the pure experients (*śuddha pramātā*) which abide on the different levels of creation within the sphere of divine *śakti* (*śaktyaṇḍa*) active as *mahāmāyā* perpetually experience the pure I-experience, but those monads within the sphere of divine *śakti* which acts as *māyā* or *prakṛti* do not experience this. They only know it potentially within themselves, on account of its covered by different kinds of defilements, like *māyīya mala* and *kārmamala*. Spiritual seekers have to make great efforts in the form of spiritual discipline, aided by infusions of divine grace, to eradicate the *malas* — especially *māyīya mala* — thereby elevating themselves above the level of *antaḥkaraṇa*, the triad of intellect, egoity and mind. This is because the self-experience as a pure subject (*śuddha ahaṁtā*) belongs to a domain beyond the reach of the intellect. It is described in Advaita texts as *nirvikalpa*, free from thought-constructs.[86]

[85] *Tantrasāra*, Upodghāta.

[86] *Ibid*.

As to its nature and form in experiential terms, the Advaita Śaiva writers describe it as having the form of the experience of the self within 'the pure real self' (*ātmani ātmabodha*) — as opposed to the ego-experience (*ahaṁkāra*), which is held to be in the form of the experience of the self within the not-self (*anātmani ātmabodha*).[87] In this context, the not-self is represented by physical body, or any of its constituent elements, and the locus of this kind of experience is the *antaḥkaraṇa*. The experience of self is the pure consciousness-self, called the *ahambodha* or *ahaṁtā*, arising in the mirror of consciousness (*cit-darpaṇa*) that lies beyond the sphere of intellect. This experience is held to be in the form of awareness (*bodha*), as opposed to egoity, which is intellectual knowledge.

5. Twofold ignorance and twofold knowledge (*bauddha* and *pauruṣa ajñāna* and *jñāna*)

Related to the concepts of egoity (*ahaṁkāra*) and pure I-experience (*ahaṁbodha*) discussed in the previous section is the Advaita Śaiva theory of twofold ignorance (*ajñāna*) and twofold knowledge (*jñāna*), formulated by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra*[88] and the *Tantrāloka*. Twofold ignorance is comprised of *pauruṣa ajñāna* (spiritual ignorance) and *bauddha ajñāna* (intellectual ignorance), while its counterpart, twofold knowledge, is comprised of *pauruṣa jñāna* (spiritual knowledge) and *bauddha jñāna* (intellectual knowledge). It may be noted that this description of ignorance and knowledge is unconventional, and is part of the unique contribution made by Advaita Śaivites to Indian philosophical thought.

The Advaita Śaivites describe spiritual ignorance (*pauruṣa ajñāna*) to be an offshoot of self-contraction (*ātma saṅkoca*) after the *cidaṇus* are equipped with gross physical bodies. It is more prominent in human *sakalas*, appearing in them in the form of their experience of the not-self (*anātmā*), symbolised by their physical body,

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[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*

or any of its constituent elements, within their consciousness-self (*ātmā*). Abhinavagupta therefore defines *pauruṣa ajñāna* (spiritual ignorance) as *ātmani anātmabodha* — of the nature of self-experience (*parāmarśa*) in the form of the not-self (*anātmā*) within the consciousness-self (*ātmā*). The locus of this self-experience is the unlimited percepients' mirror of consciousness (*cit-darpaṇa*), *caitanya*, which serves as the reflecting medium of every one of their self-experiences. Since this self-experience is produced on the level beyond the reach of *citta* at the time of the gross manifestation of the world, limited subjects are not normally aware of this. Also, being an offshoot of the act of self-contraction on the part of the supreme subject, it cannot be eradicated by limited human *sakala*s through their *sādhanā*. It comes into being at the time of the manifestation of the world, but it can only be destroyed by the infusion of grace of the supreme Lord (in this context, called *śaktipāta*). The reason for holding this view is that divine grace (the end of the self-contraction) alone is capable of nullifying the effects of the self-contraction in the form of *āṇavamala*, which also is of the nature of a self-contraction.

The second kind of ignorance, called *bauddha ajñāna* (intellectual ignorance), is located in the *buddhi* or *citta* (intellect) of the embodied human *sakala*. It is described by Abhinavagupta as *anātmani ātmabodha*, the experience of the self in the not-self. This self-experience, created in embodied human beings after being equipped with a gross physical body, is obviously false as it arises from the superimposition of the self-experience upon the not-self, represented by the physical body or any constituent thereof in his intellect. It is thus an artificially-created *vikalpa*, made for carrying out worldly transactions, as noted above while examining the nature of the ego.[89]

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[89] *Ibid*; see also the author's article entitled 'Abhinavagupta and the concept of Ignorance in Kashmir Śaivism' in *Evam* vol. 4:182 pp. 414 ff.

6. The concept of *pūrṇāhamtā* (the integral I-experience) and its basis and implications in Śaiva thought

We have briefly referred to the concepts of *ahaṁtā* and *pūrṇāhaṁtā*, two key concepts in the philosophy of the Advaita Śaiva thought of Kashmir in the previous chapter. We discussed these experiences of the three classes of pure experients (*pramātā*) existing on the levels of *sadāśiva tattva, īśvara tattva* and the *śuddhavidyā tattva*, and by *śiva pramātā* on the level of *śiva tattva*. One might naturally ask whether these two concepts — of the *aḥamtā* experienced by the different pure experients, and of *pūrṇahaṁtā*, the self-experience of *śiva pramātā* — are similar or different, and if different, then what are the points of distinction between *ahaṁtā* and *pūrṇahaṁtā*. It is necessary here to answer briefly these questions, to avoid confusion.

While there is no fundamental difference in the nature of these two key concepts, there are some points of distinction between them from the point of view of the status of their experients in the hierarchy of the seven kinds of experients, mentioned before. Let us begin our discussion with their nature from the concept of *ahaṁtā* (pure I-experience).

The Advaita Śaiva writers hold that all pure experients belonging to the *śuddha adhva* (the pure realm of consciousness) have their experience of self in their *real* self (*ātmani ātmabodha*) in the form of *ahaṁtā* (the pure I-experience). It is said to arise in them naturally and spontaneously in the form of self-awareness (*bodha*), and not as knowledge (*jñāna*). In his *Ajaḍapramātrisiddhi* [90] Utpala observes that it is caused by the light of pure consciousness focused on itself, which is the same as resting upon itself.

The Advaita Śaivas hold that this self-experience as the pure I (*aham*) has its seat in their mirror of consciousness (*citdarpaṇa*), which serves as the locus for experience. It is beyond the reach of the

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[90] *Op. cit.*, V. 22.

finite intellect for two reasons: one, pure experients devoid of any physical body do not possess an intellect, as it precludes the possibility of having I-experiences, and secondly, the self-experience as *ahaṁtā* (pure I-experience) is infinite in form, therefore not even the experients belonging to the sphere of *māyā* who possess a physical body and finite intellect can grasp it.

The Advaita Śaiva texts designate the self-reflective experience of *śiva pramātā* as *pūrṇāhamtā* at the level of the *śivatattva*. His I-experience reflects His fullness-nature; hence the Advaita Śaiva texts add the prefix *pūrṇa-* ('fullness') to their self-experience as *ahaṁtā*. Since this concept is multidimensional one, pregnant with deeper implications in the contexts of both metaphysics and spiritual realisation, it would perhaps be better for our understanding if we discuss its nature in some detail within the background of the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the universe.

It has been mentioned in a previous section that the ceaselessly-pulsating divine *śakti* operates in two distinct ways: she operates while remaining inseparably fused with *parama* Śiva when she reveals His nature as the supreme Lord, and she also simultaneously operates somewhat separately from Him when she reveals His immanent nature as the world manifestation. Some texts metaphorically describe this latter mode of the activity of the divine *śakti* as 'His expansion in the form of His divine *śakti*' (*Sva-śakti-sphāra*).[91]

All thirty-six *tattva*s collectively and separately partake of the nature of the divine *śakti*, causing the manifestation of the world. It is held by the Advaita Śaivites that every *tattva* embodies within its core being a phase or *kalā* of the divine *śakti*. These phases are separately represented by the letters (*varṇa*) of the *devanāgarī* alphabet, collectively referred to as the *varṇamālā* (garland of letters). Keeping this in view, the Advaita Śaiva writers conceive a relation of denoted and denotation (*vācya vācaka sambandha*) between the *tattvas* and the *varṇas* (letters) which symbolise them.

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[91] *Supra.*

They believe that the supreme Lord's self-experience (*svātma-parāmarśa*) — both as *purṇāhamtā* on the level of *śiva tattva* and as *aham* (I-experience) on the lower levels of *śadāśiva tattva*, *īśvara tattva* and *śuddha vidyā tattva* — begins with the letter '*a*' (*a-varṇa*) and ends with the letter '*ha*' (*ha-varṇa*), and contains within it the vast expense of the universe in a 'seminal' form, as pulsations (*spanda*) of *śakti*.[92]

The *devanāgarī* alphabet is comprised of two distinct groups of letters, vowels (*svara varṇa*) and consonants (*vyañjana varṇa*). The vowels are regarded as 'independent' in nature, insofar as their pronunciation is concerned, but the consonants 'depend' on the vowels, since these cannot be uttered without the help of vowels — especially the *varṇa* '*a*' (implicit with any written consonant in *devanāgarī*, unless specifically negated).

It is therefore said that the vowels (*svara varṇa*), from '*a*' to '*aṁ*', symbolise the totality of the divine *śakti* in its pure, unalloyed form (*śuddha*); these 'make manifest' the consonants, which represent the thirty-six *tattva*s which constitute the gross, concrete universe. All this will be clear from the following table of the 'denoting' letters (*vācaka varṇa*) and their corresponding 'denoted' *tattvas* (*vācya*) which constitute the totality of the worldly manifestation.

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[92] *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, sutra 20. See also *Tantrāloka* Āh III, verses 67 ff.

'Denoter' letters (vācaka varṇas)	***'Denoted' components of world manifestation (vācya)*** Symbolising the activity of the divine *śakti* in different modes.
Vowels	***Tattva***
a-varṇa	*anuttara*, the supreme Lord, or *citśakti*.
ā-varṇa	*ānanda śakti* (power-as-bliss)
i-varṇa	*icchā śakti* (power-as-will)
ī-varṇa	*īśāna* (lordship power, regarded as the 'resting place' or the terminal point for the extension of the *icchā śakti*)
u-varṇa	*unmeṣa* (the power of revelation)
ū-varṇa	the *viśrānti* of *unmeṣa* (the resting place of the terminal point of *unmeṣa*)
e-varṇa	*anuttara* (*a-varṇa*) interpenetrated by *icchā śakti* (*i-varṇa*); *a* + *i* = *e-varṇa*
ai-varṇa	*ānanda śakti* (*ā-varṇa*) interpenetrated by *icchā śakti*; *ā* + *i* = *ai-varṇa*
o-varṇa	*anuttara* interpenetrated by *unmeṣa śakti* (*u-varṇa*); *a*+*u* = *o-varṇa*
au-varṇa	*ānanda śakti* interpenetrated by *unmeṣa śakti*; ā + u = *au-varṇa*
ṛ, ṝ, ḷ, ḹ	the denotation of four kinds of mixed *śakti*s: the *i-varṇa* + *kriyā śakti*, the *ī-varṇa* + *kriyā śakti*, the *u-varṇa* + *kriyā śakti*, and the *ū-varṇa* + *kriyā śakti*

After the manifestation of the divine *śakti*'s modes of activity as symbolised by the fourteen vowels, the divine *śakti* 'withdraws' the extended form of her activity (*prasāra*) to converge within herself on one point, technically called *bindu*. The *bindu* is denoted by the fifteenth vowel letter '*aṁ*', which represents the activity of the divine *śakti* in a highly potentialized form.

We have described the phases of the divine *śakti* operating in the form of and in the terms of denoter and denoted. This is followed by the divine *śakti* turning towards 'vomiting' or 'sending forth' the *tattvas*, as denoted by the sixteenth vowel letter '*aḥ*', called *visarga*.

34 consonants symbolising different *tattvas* arranged in reverse order representing the self-expressions of the Divine Śakti

Denoter letter ***(vācaka varṇas)***	***Denoted tattvas*** ***(vācya tattvas)***
ka, kha, ga, gha, ṅa	the five *mahābhūtas* (the gross material elements)
ca, cha, ja, jha, ña	the five *tanmātrās* (the subtle material elements)
ṭa, ṭha, ḍa, ḍha, ṇa	five sense faculties of cognition (*jñānendriyas*)
ta, tha, da, dha, na	the five organs of action (*karmendriyas*)
pa, pha, ba, bha, ma	*manas, ahaṁkāra, buddhi, prakṛti* and *puruṣa*
ya, ra, la, va	*rāga, vidyā, kalā* and *māyā tattvas*
ṣa, śa, sa, ha	*śuddha vidyā, īsvara sadāśiva* and *śakti tattvas*, arranged in a reverse order

This completes the supreme Lord's self-manifestation as the totality of universe in regards to the different phases of the divine *śakti*. The Lord is said to experience the totality of the universe not as comprised by thirty-five concretized *tattvas*, but rather as made up of so many phases of divine, pulsating *śakti* represented by the *vācaka varṇas*. Thus, when a spiritual practitioner (*sādhaka*) succeeds in recognising his true divine nature as Śiva, he is said to involuntarily utter "*so 'ham*" ("I am He", i.e. Śiva), then the universe in which he abides does not disappear from his view. By uttering "*so 'ham*", he actually surveys the vast expense of universe within his self-experience as His glory, expressed in the play of His divine *śakti*. The self-experience as *aham* by 'realised' beings — in the form of the *purṇāhaṁtā* of Śiva *pramātā* on the level of the *śiva tattva* — is the highest self-experience, and it marks the attainment of the ultimate goal in life; it is the end of our spiritual journey to the realisation of our Śiva nature.

As we have already mentioned, the conceptual or impure 'I-experience' of the ego (*ahaṁtā*) is totally different in nature, in that it has its locus in the finite intellect of the embodied individual being, and that it is of the nature of the 'experience of the self within the not-self' (*anātmani ātmabodha*). This self-experience by finite embodied beings (*sakala*) is finite in nature; therefore, it is called an ego-experience, and as such is subject to eradication by the spiritual practitioner (*sādhaka*). But the pure self-experience of a spiritual seeker as *pūrṇāhaṁtā* — known upon recognising one's own Śiva nature, attaining oneness with his Śiva essence (*samāveśa*) —is regarded as *nirvikalpa* in nature, and has its locus in the consciousness which serves as the medium of reflection (*cit darpaṇa*).

~Chapter V~

ADDENDA

Introduction to other key concepts

Kashmir Śaiva texts throw light onto the nature of *prāṇa* (vital force), *mantra* (sacred word), *kāla* (time), *deśa* (space), *nāda* (primordial sound), *bindu* (the divine *śakti* in a highly condensed state) and *kalā* and *mātṛkā* (phases of the divine *śakti*) — inter-related metaphysical concepts that are said to play important roles within spiritual discipline (*sādhanā*) as laid down by the Advaita *śaivācāryas* in their religio-philosophical cenceptualizations. Since the main objective of this book is to review the sublime and comprehensive metaphysical thoughts of this school, in foregoing chapters we have deliberately refrained from discussing any subject which would pertain to spiritual discipline.

However, we are aware that spiritual discipline (*sādhanā*) contributes an integral part of the religio-philosophical thought of the Advaita Śaiva school, and that our knowledge of the philosophy of this school would remain incomplete if we were to altogether exclude *sādhanā* from our exposition of this philosophy.

It is therefore proposed to shed some light on a few of the topics listed above in this chapter entitled 'Addenda', knowing fully well that these topics, strictly speaking, belong more to the domain of spiritual discipline than to that of metaphysics. We believe that a brief discussion of these topics would help us to appreciate the unique contributions made by this school to enrich the ancient Indian spiritual heritage.

Before we discuss these topics, we propose to first examine the concept of *citta*. Though it has no direct bearing on the metaphysics

of *sādhanā*, it has been mostly unconventionally illuminated by Advaita Śaiva philosophers.

1. *Citta* in Advaita Śaiva thought

Every school of Indian philosophical thought recognizes three poles (*tripuṭī*) in the experience of the world: the experient or subject (*grāhaka*), the object of experience (*grāhya*) and the instrument of knowledge (*grahaṇa* or *karaṇa*). All schools formulate their own views on the origin, nature and functions of these poles in accordance with their particular viewpoint to advance their metaphysical thoughts. For example, the pluralist Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school believes in the side-by-side existence of the subject, the object of knowledge and the instrument of knowledge. They call the subject 'the self' (*ātman*), one of the ten kinds of substances (*dravya*); the objects of knowledge and the *manas* or mind are also substances, which join together in an embodied being to produce the attribute called 'knowledge' (*jñāna*) inside the *ātman*.[1] In this regard, they refer to the three kinds of relations (*sambandha*) between the objects of knowledge and the senses, the senses and the *manas* (mind), and *manas* with the *ātman*, which all join together to produce knowledge inside the self.[2]

The dualist Sāṁkhya-Yoga label *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as the two distinct realities, respectively sentient and insentient, mutually opposite in nature and independently existent parallel realities. *Puruṣa* being of the nature of consciousness is the subject and the spectator (*sākṣī*), while *prakṛti*, being material in nature, serves as the object of knowledge. *Prakṛti* also provides for the *puruṣas* (which exist embodied inside the world) with the instruments of knowledge, namely different kinds of sense-faculties (*indriya*) and *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal sense organs) for grasping and enjoying the objects of knowledge.[3]

The Advaita Vedānta of Śaṇkara's school also admit the existence of these three poles, which they said are made manifest by

[1] *Tarkabhāṣā* (Keśava Miśra).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* (V. 23 *Tattvakaumudi* thereon).

māyā, which operates on the phenomenal level (*vyavahārika*) while the worldly phenomena manifests.

Since we are presently concerned with the examination of the origin and nature of the instruments of knowledge (*karaṇa*), we shall restrict our discussion to the origin and nature of the faculties of the senses, particularly to the internal sense faculties (*antaḥkaraṇa*) or *citta*, a term used by some schools of Indian philosophy. We propose to give an overview of the concept of *antaḥkaraṇa* as conceived by some other schools, in order to build a background for our examination of the origin and nature of *citta* as conceptualized by the Advaita Śaivites of Kashmir.

We frequently come across the term *citta* in the *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali, where it has been used as a synonym of *antaḥkaraṇa*, or 'inner sense instrument'. The three modes of the activity of *antaḥkaraṇa* — revealed during the production of knowledge as represented by *manas* (mind) *ahaṁkāra* (egoity) and *buddhi* (intellect) — are all subsumed within *citta*.[4] It is held to have evolved from *prakṛti*, the material power, over the course of the manifestation of the world. It is said to be of the nature of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the three *guṇas* which constitute the very nature of *prakṛti*, the creatix of the gross world; it was provided to every embodied being to serve as their instrument of knowledge, within their gross bodies. Though material and insentient in nature, it becomes luminous (*tejomaya*) and sentient-like when it approaches the consciousness-light of the *puruṣa*, the sentient self, serving as its instrument of knowledge. *Prakṛti* is said to be responsible for binding the ignorant embodied beings, more and more over time, within the webs of *saṁsāra* (multiple and continuous transmigration) by providing them with both the objects of knowledge and the instruments for their enjoyment. At the same time, the same *prakṛti* produces within them the knowledge of discrimination (*vivekajñāna*) between her and *puruṣa*, paving way for their emancipation.[5]

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[4] *Yogasūtra* (Patañjali) with *Vyāsa bhāṣya su* 1 Samādhipāda.

[5] *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* P. Kā 63 com. thereon.

The Advaita Vedāntins of Śaṅkara conceptualise *citta* as a product of *māyā*, coming into existence during the manifestation of the phenomenal world. It has been provided in the physical body to serve as the internal sense-faculty. Being a product of *māyā*, it is inert in nature (*jaḍa*), but is rendered luminous when the light of consciousness falls upon it; as a matter of fact, the *antaḥkaraṇa* made luminous by the light of consciousness is said to 'flow' through the outlets (*dvāra*) of the external sense-faculties to seize the objects of knowledge, thereby producing knowledge. Within *citta* — which the Advaita Vedāntins regard as a distinct kind of internal sense-faculty — is said to discharge the specific function of memory (*smṛti*)[6] inside the physical bodies of embodied beings.

Keeping in the back of one's mind these divergent views on the origin, nature and functions of the *citta* as expressed by the different schools of Indian philosophical thought, let us now turn our attention to the views on the subject expressed by the Advaita Śaiva writers. Their approach to this problem is altogether different; according to them, *citta* is real and existent — like any other worldly manifestation of the *saṁvid* or *caitanya*. It comes into being when the *citi* — also known as the *saṁvid śakti* (the universal consciousness power), always active and remaining coalesced with the *saṁvid* (the supreme experiencing principle) — reveals herself as the universe, of her own volition (*svacchayā svabhittau viśvamunmilayati*).

In his *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, Kṣemarāja sheds light on the nature of *citi*, or *saṁvidśakti*, and the emergence of *citta* from her during this process of her worldly self-manifestation. According to him, in Her pure form, *citi* (*citśakti* or *saṁvid śakti*) exists on the highest level as the unrestricted universal power of consciousness (*asaṅkocinī*), pervading the entire cosmos-to-be. Over the course of her descent, she reveals herself as the world: this selfsame *citi* assumes a state of contraction (*saṅkocam gṛhṇāti*) and thereby manifests herself as *citta*, the internal sense-faculty, or *antaḥkaraṇa*,[7]

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[6] *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* (*Dharmarāja Adhvarindri*) p. 34 (Pratyakṣa Section).

which takes its seat inside the psychophysical framework of the physical body.[8]

In both his abovementioned *sūtra* and his own commentary upon it, Kṣemarāja has given some details of the process of *citi*'s self-revelation as *citta*, as the objects of knowledge (*grāhya padārtha*) and as the external sense faculties (*grahaṇa*). He says that when the *citi* contracts (*saṅkoca*) during creation, she is revealed in two distinct forms:[9] sometimes the *citi* is revealed as her 'light-of-consciousness' form (*cit prakāśarūpa*) dominant, and otherwise as the form of the *pramātā*, the experient at the various levels of creation. The different kinds of pure subjects (*śuddha pramātā*) said to exist on the different levels in the *śuddha adhva* represent the pure form of the self-contracted *citi*, with the consciousness-light (*prakāśa*) dominating their self-experience (*svātmaparāmarśa*) (*kadācit ullasati saṅkoca guṇīkritya citprādhanyena sphurati*). As the world further unfolds, the same self-contracted *citi* sometimes reveals herself with prominent limitations or contractions; *citi* manifests as the limited subjects (*sankucita grāhakarūpeṇa*) on the various levels of the *aśuddha adhva*. Along with the manifestation of limited subjects, the self-contracted *citi* — disposed towards comprehending objects or qualities (*artha grahaṇonmukhī sati*) like 'blue' (a word employed to represent any given external object) or 'pleasure' (representing the internal objects) — instantaneously becomes the instruments of knowledge (*grahaṇa*) of the limited subjects. In this way, the *citi* becomes *citta*. Afterwards, when the limited being (*paśu*) through his performance of spiritual discipline (*sādhanā*) realizes his true nature as Śiva, the *citta* (i.e. *citi* in contracted form) become *citi* (the universal consciousness); as through an inward movement, it rises to the status of *cetana* (consciousness).[10]

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[7] *Op. cit.*, Sū 5 p. 59 ff.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid*, Sū 13. Also see *Śiva sūtra*, sūtra II, 1 Com.

In this context, one might like to know if the instruments of knowledge (*grahaṇa*) of the different pure and impure subjects cause any difference in the perception of the objects of knowledge to their users, whether they belong to the pure realm of existence or to the impure ones. In reply, the Advaita Śaivites would say that there is one basic difference between their knowledge or cognition, namely the pure realm of existence is characterized by a non-difference (*advaita*) between subject and its object, which is also reflected within the cognition of that realm's denizens. They always experience the non-difference between themselves and the object of their experience, with *aham* and *idam* both being universal in nature. Impure limited subjects (*mita pramātā*) which belong to the impure level of creation (*aśuddha adhva*) inside the spheres of *māyā* and *prakṛti*, are characterised by difference (*bheda*) and discrete-ness: therefore, their selves are experienced as 'ego' (*ahaṁkāra*), and they cognise limited objects to be distinct from themselves through their instruments of knowledge.

In her universal form associated with the supreme *saṁvid*, *citi śakti* is said to serve as the mirror of consciousness (*cit-darpana*), to reflect the totality of world-manifestation in an 'ideal' form, as the object of experience symbolized by 'this-ness' or *idam*. The *idam* is experienced by the supreme *saṁvid*, who plays the role of the supreme subject; he sees it as reflected in the mirror of his consciousness (symbolising his *chitta* as it were), containing within its bosom the seminal form of the totality of the worldly manifestation, like an egg containing a full-fledged hen. Every detail of the object '*idam*' exists in its subtle form in that 'ideal' experience, like a mirror showing a flawless reflection of an entire city, including every road building, tree and park. Abhinavagupta explained this beautifully in his *Paramārthasāra*, with this metaphor: "Just as a city comprised of a variety of objects, when reflected in a mirror, might be seen by a subject as not-different from the mirror, yet is still something different and distinct, in the same way the universe, appearing in the mirror of consciousness, is experienced by the supreme subject as not-

different from his *citi*, or consciousness power, though in reality, it is something different."[11]

The consciousness-force (*citi*) which constitutes the supreme subject's 'mirror of consciousness' has all five modes of *citiśakti*'s activity: *cid* (consciousness), *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā* are all innate within the mirror made of *citiśakti*. The triad of three *śaktis* — namely, of *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā* — play pivotal roles in *saṁvid śakti*'s manifestation as the world; therefore, no external *bimba* (object to be reflected) is needed when the totality of the world-manifestation is reflected inside the mirror of consciousness for the supreme *saṁvid* to experience.[12] The three *śaktis* innate in the mirror of consciousness accomplish the task of simultaneously 'conjuring up' the world in its ideal form, and projecting before the supreme subject, for him to experience.

The same is not the case when the *citi śakti* appears in its contracted form as the *citta* (or *antaḥkaraṇa*) associated with the embodied individual being. This *citta* is also noted to be a product of *prakṛti*; as such, it normally has *tamoguṇa* as its dominant constituent, acting as a veil within the *citta*. This is temporarily lifted when the *sattva* constituent of the *citta* becomes dominant, and images of external objects are received through the 'door' of the external sense-faculties. The contracted *citta* then also serves as the reflecting medium (like a mirror) to individual beings when they experience external objects. In the limited experient, the *citta* experiences the objects of the world as outside and independent of him. The external objects act as *bimbas* (objects of reflection) which produce their images within the *citta*. These images, when illuminated by the light of consciousness in the subject, produce knowledge inside the *citta* for the subject to be aware of.

2. *Prāṇa*, its origin and its role in the life of embodied beings

As mentioned in Chapter I, the Advaita Śaivites of Kashmir assign the role of the supreme experiencing principle to the *parāsaṁvit*,

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[11] *Par. Sar* (Abhinavagupta) V. 9 Com.

[12] Cf. *Tantrāloka* Ah. IV, 59 ff Com. thereon.

the ultimate reality that is said to be endowed with unending pulsation (*spandana svabhāva*) as an inalienable aspect of its nature. Exercising this divine *śakti*, during the creative cycle of its self-manifestation, the *parāsaṁvit* becomes the multiplicity of the world, with its infinite numbers of sentient subjects, insentient objects of knowledge and the instruments (*sādhana*) for seizing the objects and enjoying them. Seen from the *parāsaṁvit*'s point of view, its self-manifestation as the world represents its involution (*avaroha*) or descent from the highest spiritual level to the level of gross matter (*jaḍa*), without giving up its immutable or ineffable character as the transcendent absolute (*anuttara saṁvit*).

Within our daily worldly experience, all sentient, embodied beings are associated with the vital life force called *prāṇa*, which keeps them alive, consciousness of their being (*sattā*) and responsive to external stimuli. Since the Advaita Śaiva texts do not mention *prāṇa* as a distinct ontological entity (*tattva*) forming either the cosmos or the physical body of all beings, questions naturally arise about *prāṇa* in discerning minds. These texts indeed do provide us with answers to these questions, shedding light on its origin and nature, and also examining the role it plays in both the mundane and the spiritual lives of embodied beings.

Quoting a statement of Kallaṭa, the well-known exponent of the doctrine of *spanda*, cited in the *Tantrāloka*[13] (Ah. VI V.12), Kṣemarāja in his *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* ('The Secret of Recognition', *sūtra* 17) briefly explains the origin and nature of *prāṇa* in this way. According to him, when the *parā saṁvit* manifests itself as the world, it transforms itself (*pariṇate*) into *prāṇa* over the course of its involution (*avaroha*) from the highest spiritual level to the gross level of matter (*saṁvit prāṇe pariṇatā iti nitya prāṇaśakti bhūmim...*). In this context, *saṁvid* implies not only *saṁvit* in its static form (also called Śiva), but also the *saṁvidśakti* — the dynamic form of *saṁvid*, also called the consciousness-force (*citśakti*) that perpertually functions

[13] *Ibid* VI, op. cit. V, 12.

while remaining fused with the *saṁvid* — for revealing its divine forms, both transcendent and immanent (*viśvottīrṇa* and *viśvātmaka svarūpa*). This description of the nature and function of *saṁvid śakti* is in conformity with the Advaita Śaiva view of the process of manifestation of the world, 'the unrolling of the divine *śakti*' (*śakti sphāra*). The *prāṇaśakti* represents the *saṁvid śakti* in its transformed form (*pariṇata rūpa*), therefore it must admitted to be of the essential nature of *saṁvid* (*cidrūpa*, or *saṁvid rūpa*).

The Advaita Śaiva texts describe the process of the transformation of *saṁvid śakti* into *prāṇa śakti* in the following manner. It is said that just before *saṁvid* manifests itself as the world by exercising its *saṁvid śakti*, of its own volition it imposes limitations on itself, which results in its contraction (*saṅkoca*). The self-contracted *saṁvid śakti* contracts further as it descends from the pure sphere of the *mahāmāyā* to the level of *māyā*, where the *māyā śakti* envelops the self-contracted *saṁvit śakti*, hiding its nature as the consciousness-force (*citirodhānakarī māyā*). This results in the dawning of *prāṇaśakti*, the transformation of *saṁvid śakti* (*pariṇāma*) into the *prāṇaśakti* as mentioned by Kṣemarāja.[14] It may be mentioned here that a well-known Śaiva *yogī* described the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* (*prāṇaśakti* in a coiled state) as the revealing and concealing energy of Lord Śiva, not different from Him, as light-energy and heat-energy (*prakāśikā śakti* and *dāhikā śakti*) are not different from the fire (*agni*): it is the 'heart' of Lord Śiva.[15] In the Advaita Śaiva spiritual tradition, it is said that, when the divine *śakti* (in the form of *kuṇḍalinī śakti*) creates the universe, Lord Śiva (concealing His real nature) 'projects Himself' as this universe; then, as there is no Śiva 'left', *kuṇḍalinī śakti* can then be experienced by Śaiva *yogins* by focusing on the junction of two breaths (inhalation and exhalation), two thoughts (*vikalpas*), two movements, and so on. We shall take up this later while discussing the role it plays in spiritual discipline.

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[14] *Op. cit.*, Sū 17.

[15] '*Kuṇḍalinī rahasya*' article by Swami Lakṣmaṇa Joo.

The Advaita Śaiva tradition maintains that, when the *saṁvid śakti* is revealed in the beginning of the world manifestation as *prāṇaśakti*, it is at that time universal in nature, pervading the entire cosmos, and is given the name *mahāprāṇa*; macroscopically, it permeates everything sentient and self-aware in nature. In its microcosmic form, after the creation of the gross world, the same *prāṇaśakti* enters into the physical bodies of every sentient being, making them alive, active and responsive to external stimuli. *Prāṇaśakti* then begins functioning in the embodied beings' physical bodies.

After entering every individual physical body, the microcosmic *prāṇaśakti* spreads within their physical framework, moving through the network of *nāḍīs* (subtle nerve channels, said to be 72,000 in number), activating all their organs and sense faculties, making them responsive to external stimuli. The embodied being comes alive in this way. The Advaita Śaivites hold the *buddhi* (intellect) as the main abode of the microcosmic *prāṇaśakti*, from where it flows down to different parts of the physical body through the network of *nāḍīs* (*buddhi-dehādibhāvam adhiśayanā nāḍīsaraṇim anusritā*).[16]

Let us now turn our attention to the role *prāṇaśakti* plays in the upliftment of *sādhakas*. Kṣemarāja has described the *mādhyanāḍī* (the middle channel) running down from the *brahmarandhra* (the doorway to 'the state of Brahman', or all-pervasive reality) or *sahasrāra* ('the thousand-petalled' lotus-like centre) at the crown of the head to the *adhovaktra* (the 'lower face' of the channel) situated below the genitals, at the root of the rectum (called the *meḍhra kanda*) as the main channel for the flow of *prāṇaśakti*. Kṣemarāja described the *madhyanāḍī*, along with the innumerable *nāḍīs* branching off from it in every directions, through the analogy of the *palaśa* leaf (*butea frondosa*): just as innumerable veinlets emerge from the central vein of a *palasa* leaf, going to different places within the leaf, the same is the case with the *madhyanāḍī*, with thousands of nerve channels going to different parts of the physical body.[17]

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[16] *Pratyabhijñahṛdayam*, sū 17, com. thereon.

In terms of physiology, the *madhyanāḍī* is the central channel which runs through the cerebero-spinal axis from the cerebrum down to the end of the spinal axis below the genitals. It is called *suṣumnā*: parallel to the central channel (interchangeably called *madhyanāḍī* or *suṣumnā*) run two *nāḍīs* or nerve channels called *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, to the left and right of the central *suṣumnā*. These two *nāḍīs* are curved like a bow, meeting near the mid-point of the eyebrows, at a place called the *ājñācakra*. These two *nāḍīs* serve as channels for the upward and downward movement of two of the vital breaths, *apāna* and *prāṇa*, in the form of exhalation and inhalation.

Practitioners of spiritual disciplines which depend on the use of *prāṇaśakti* talk about the existence of three narrow channels existing within the *madhyanāḍī* like vertical layers, one within the other; these are called the *tāmasika suṣumnā* (the fiery red outer channel), the *rājasika suṣumnā*, also called *vajriṇīnāḍī* (the lustrous middle channel), and the *sāttvika suṣumnā*, also called the *citriṇīnāḍī* or the *brahmanāḍī* (the innermost soothing white channel). Since these *nāḍīs* all run from the bottom to the *sahasrāra* within the *madhyanāḍī* to enable the motion of *prāṇaśakti*, the *suṣumnā nāḍī* outwardly seems to be made of fire, and is therefore described as *vahni svarūpā*; the *rājasika nāḍī* within the *suṣumnā nāḍī* is said to resemble the sun, and hence is described as *sūrya rūpā*, and the *sāttvika suṣumnā*, the innermost channel within the *madhyanāḍī* is compared to soothing white lunar light. The *sāttvika suṣumnā* or *citriṇināḍī* opens at the top of the cerebro-spinal axis, at the *brahmadvāra*, through which the *kuṇḍalinī* energy enters the *sahasrāra*. All these matters have been discussed in detail in the *Tantrāloka*.[18]

The *yogins* talk about six centres called *cakras* at different points on the pathway of the *suṣumnā*. From the bottom upward, these are the *mūlādhāra* (in the region below the genitals), the *svādhiṣṭhāna* (located above genitals), the *maṇipūra cakra* (around the navel

[17] *Ibid*. Also see the article "An Analysis of the Concept of Kuṇḍalini" by M.L. Pandit in *Mālinī*, Vol. I, No. 4, Oct-Dec. 2007, New Delhi.

[18] *Tantrāloka* (Abhinavagupta) Āh VI.

(*nābhi*)), the *anāhata cakra* (located near the heart (*hṛt*)), the *viśuddha cakra* (at the base of the throat (*kaṇṭha*))and the *ājñācakra* (between the eyebrows); the central *nāḍī* thereafter culminates in the *sahasrāra* or *brahmārandhra* at the crown of the head. The term '*cakra*' is applied to these six centres due to their wheel-like appearances with spoke-like apparati on their circumference which serve to absorb *prāṇaśakti* from the all-pervasive *mahāprāṇa* and distribute it to the *nāḍīs*. These *cakras* serve as resting places for *kuṇḍalinī śakti* when it rises in gradual steps from the *mulādhara cakra* to *sahasrāra*. It may be mentioned here that this account of the location of the *cakras* and their roles is similar to that described in the Haṭhayoga texts. Some other yogic traditions mention the existence of 'petals' in the *cakras*; this is not admitted by the Śaiva tradition.

Some ancient Upaniṣads also mention *prāṇa* as an important component of the subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*) in the individual, held responsible for the sentience of the embodied being. It is a product of cosmic *māyā*, like the other components of the physical body. Being a product of *māyā*, it serves as a sheath for concealing the true nature of the self. *Prāṇa* is held to be part and parcel of *prāṇamayakośa*, one of the sheaths for covering the self, made from *prāṇa*. By *prāṇa*, the Upaniṣads generally mean '*prāṇavāyu*' which, operating within various parts of the physical body, controls the activity of different organs. The Upaniṣads mention five kinds of *prāṇavāyu*: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *udāna*, *vyāna* and *samāna*, always acting in unison to keep the embodied being alive and moving. The Upaniṣads also speak about three main *nāḍīs* or channels (also called *iḍā*, *suṣumnā*, and *piṇgalā*) though which the *prānic* energy flows ceaselessly into thousands of nerve channels spread over the body to make it sentient and alive. As to its role, the Upaniṣads advise spiritual practitioners to try to equalize the inhaled and exhaled breaths (*prāṇa* and *apāna*) which ceaselessly move down and up through the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā nāḍīs*. This paves the way for the opening of the *suṣumnā nāḍī*, which normally remains blocked, so that the *prānic* energy might rise to the level of the *sahasrāra* to attain the stillness of *citta vṛtti* (i.e. the

modification of *citta*). When this is achieved, the *citta* becomes an ideal reflecting medium like a mirror to reflect the effulgent nature of the self. It may mentioned in this context that the Upaniṣads look upon the five vital breaths as the gross visible form of *prāṇaśakti* acting in the physical body to keep it alive. Besides this role in stilling the *citta* (*citta vṛtti nirodha*) and thereby making it a fit medium for directly experiencing the true self, in the Upanisadic view of a *sādhaka*'s discipline, *prāṇa* has no direct role to play. The Upaniṣads in general — and *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali in particular — prescribe the practice of *prāṇāyāma* (control over one's inhalation and exhalation) as one of the means for achieving the stillness of *citta*.[19] This is essentially a practice of *kriyā yoga*.

As already mentioned above, the Advaita Śaiva writers of Kashmir conceptualise the *prāṇa* as *śakti*, of which *prāṇa*-as-breath is a gross visible from. Created out of the self-assumed contraction of the *saṁvid śakti*, it operates ceaselessly to keep the psycho-physical framework alive and quasi-sentient. *Prāṇaśakti* plays a crucial role in the *sādhaka*'s spiritual discipline, serving as an instrument for arousing the *saṁvid śakti* lying dormant in his *mūlādhāra cakra*. It is called *kuṇḍalinī śakti* on account of its state of coiled repose. When the *sādhaka* creates an equilibrium between his *prāṇa* and *apāna* and the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* is aroused from slumber, as it were, it moves upwards, piercing the *cakras* as it rises towards the *brahmarandhra*, striving to unite with the static form of *saṁvid* called Śiva. As it passes through the different *cakras* which thereby are vitalized and filled with *saṁvid śakti*, the *sādhaka* has subtle occult experiences, and tastes bliss in gradually increasing measures.[20]

The Advaita Śaiva texts talk about two distinct kinds of *kuṇḍalinī śakti* operating through the middle channel, one the *adaḥ kuṇḍalinī* and the other, the *ūrdha kuṇḍalinī*. It is said that the *prāṇaśakti* which moves downward from the *lambikā* (situated near the palate, a junction

[19] *Yogasūtra*.

[20] *Kuṇḍalinī Rahasya*, G.N. Kaviraja.

of four major *nāḍīs*) to the *mūlādhāra* to assume the form of 'one and three-quarters times coiled' instead of the usual 'three and a half times coiled' is called the *adhah kuṇḍalinī*. This movement of *prāṇaśakti* is said to symbolize contraction (*saṅkoca*) and is known as *vahni* (fire).

The *ūrdhva kuṇḍalinī* represents the form assumed by *prāṇaśakti* in a *sādhaka* when the equalized *prāṇa* and *apāna* enters the *suṣumnā* and 'wakes up' the *prāṇaśakti* reposing in the *kuṇḍalinī*, allowing it to rise up towards *brahmarandhra*, passing on its course through the *lambika* in the palate. When the *urdhva kuṇḍalinī* pierces the *brahmarandhra* to attain the level above the crown of the *sādhaka*'s head, it becomes all-pervasive. This is the goal of *kuṇḍalinī yoga*.

The Advaita Śaiva texts mention the distinction between the activity of *prāṇaśakti* manifested as the *prāṇa* and *apāna* of ordinary persons and of *yogins*. According to the texts, *prāṇaśakti* (in the form of *prāṇa* and *apāna*) moves involuntarily in and out of the body of ordinary embodied beings. In *yogins*, *prāṇa* and *apāna* move upwards after entering the central *suṣumnā nāḍī*.

The celebrated *śaiva yogin* Swami Lakṣman Joo has thrown light on how the *prāṇaśakti* within a *sādhaka* would gain entry into the *suṣumnā nāḍī*. He has stressed the role of *sandhi* (junction points) in Kuṇḍalinī Yoga, as seen in the spiritual practices of Śaiva *sādhakas*. These junctions within the psycho-physical framework of the *sādhaka* serve as a gateway for the flow of *prāṇaśakti* into the *suṣumnā nāḍī* and up to the *sahasrāra*. He has emphasized the practice of equilibrating two breaths, or two thoughts (*vikalpa*), or two moments, and the like.

According to him, the Advaita Śaiva texts state that *kuṇḍalinī śakti* functions within three different forms. The *parā kuṇḍalinī* is the highest form of *kuṇḍalinī śakti*, which acts to express the glory of the supreme Lord, while remaining fused with Him. It is universal in nature, and therefore its activity cannot be experienced by embodied *yogins*, but it can be experienced by them at the time of their separation from their physical bodies. The universe is said to be created by the

parā kuṇḍalinī, sustained by the *parā kuṇḍalinī* and is ultimately dissolved into the *parā kuṇḍalinī*. *Parā kuṇḍalinī* is symbolised by the letter *visarga* (':') in the tradition of the *mātṛkā cakra*, the two points in the letter *visarga* symbolizing Śiva and Śakti. As a matter of fact, these points symbolise the points of revelation and concealment of the supreme Lord's glory (*aiśvarya*).

Citkuṇḍalinī is the second form of *kuṇḍalinī śakti*, and is experienced by Śaiva *yogins* during their spiritual practices. When a Śaiva *yogin* concentrates on the mid-point between the *prāṇa* and the *apāna*, or between two thoughts, or two actions, or destruction and creation, he enters that junction to reach the *saṁvid śakti* which is ever-vibrating within. He becomes aware of it while awake, while dreaming, and in deep sleep. His breathing becomes 'heavy', then stops (*kumbhaka*) and starts 'whirling' around a point, moving on the right side of the *nāḍī*. His breath (*prāṇa*) becomes *prāṇa śakti* (life energy), and rushes down through the central channel to the *mūlādhāra*, which is experienced by the *yogin* as a 'crawling sensation' (*pipīlikāvat*), similar to the ecstatic delight of sexual intercourse. After this momentary experience, the 'crawling sensation' is transformed into a blissful existence following the rise of the *cit kuṇḍalinī* through the central channel. The bliss then experienced by the Śaiva *yogin* is simply indescribable. He then realizes that his nature is only comprised of bliss (*ānanda*) and *cit* (consciousness). When *cit kuṇḍalinī śakti* rises further up, piercing the *cakra* between his eyebrows, his breathing stops once again. Then the *cit kuṇḍalinī śakti* within him rises further, up to the *brahmarandhra*. Again, his breathing stops for a moment, which makes the Śaiva *yogin* experience an ecstatic internal bliss. His eyes remain wide open (a pose called '*śambhavī mudrā*') and he then experiences the ocean of bliss outside himself, as well. This process of expansion, followed by a pause and the resumption of breath persists; each time he is filled with more and more bliss of greater intensities. This process is called *krama mudrā*. Once a *yogin* attains this state, he remains immersed in that bliss during every subsequent state of waking, dreaming, deep sleep,

walking, talking, eating, rest, and so on. The bliss does not ever leave him. The full rise of *cit kuṇḍalinī* is said to take place only once in a lifetime; this is the state of *jivanmukti*.

The third kind of *kuṇḍalinī* is the *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī*, which is experienced by those *yogins* who are attached to both their spiritual and worldly lives. As a matter of fact, when a Śaiva *yogin* is inclined more towards spirituality and pursues his spiritual practices accordingly, the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* rises in the form of *cit kuṇḍalinī*. But, when he conducts his spiritual practices while keeping his attachment to worldly pleasures as before, his *kuṇḍalinī śakti* is said to rise in the form of *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī*. The rise of *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī* from the *mūlādhāra cakra* follows the same pattern up to a point. In the case of the rise of *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī*, the *cakra*s at the *mūlādhāra* and the *nābhi* move with a great force, producing a noise audible to the *yogins*.

It is held that such a Śaiva *yogin* experiences the rise of *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī* only up to the *nābhi cakra* because he alternates between the spiritual life and his worldly life. Only *yogins* with determination and firm devotion to the pursuit of their spiritual goals can experience the rise of the *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī* in the *madhyanāḍī* beyond the *nābhi cakra* up to *sahasrāra*, after the *cakras* begin to rotate with great velocity. The *yogin* uses his breath to effect this rise; hence, they call the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* by the name *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī*.

When the *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī* is forced by the *yogin* to rise up to the *sahasrāra*, the wheel there does not rotate, but remains stationary; ordinary *yogins* do not force the *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī* to rise further up; only great *yogins* who have ceased to have any attachment to worldly pleasures succeed in piercing the *sahasrāra cakra* to follow the same path as those *yogins* using *cit kuṇḍalinī* to reach their ultimate goal. While the *yogins* using *prāṇa kuṇḍalinī* are not able to rise beyond *sahasrāra cakra*, they need not feel dejected, because they attain the eightfold *siddhis* ('perfections'): *aṇimā* (the power to become invisible), *laghimā* (the ability to become light enough to fly), *mahimā* (the power to create and to maintain), *garimā* (the power to becoming

heavy and immovable), *īśitvam* (the power to control the universe), *vaśitavam* (the power to subjugate both animate and inanimate creatures), *prākāmyam* (the power to control the physical body) and *vyāpti* (the power to pervade the entire cosmos). These supernormal powers also figure in the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali. *Yogins* are said to be invested with these powers following the purification of their psycho-physical framework, resulting in its becoming predominantly comprised of *sattvaguṇa*. There is one disadvantage for the *sādhaka* who acquires these supernormal powers: when he uses these powers, he ceases to have any progress in his spiritual life and becomes more and more attached towards his worldly existence, demonstrating his supernormal powers to others. This comes as a hindrance to the achievement of his goal in life; hence, the true *yogin* is advised to refrain from the pursuit of these *siddhis*.

3. Nature and role of *mantra* in the spiritual practices of the Tantric tradition

Dīkṣā (initiation) is defined in the Tantric tradition as that particular rite in the spiritual life of a seeker of truth in which the 'highest spiritual knowledge' (*jñāna*) is 'given' (*dīyate*), i.e. aroused in the disciple by the spiritual master or *guru*, resulting in the destruction of those fetters which bind him (*kṣīyate paśuvāsanā*) in this worldly life. In the context of the nature of man and his states in creation, we have discussed the nature of various kinds of fetters (*pāśa*) or defilements (*mala*), enveloping every embodied being, concealing their divine essence and making them 'forget' their true nature. We have also mentioned that the infusion of divine grace (*anugraha* or *śaktipāta*) into a spiritual seeker marks both the beginning of the gradual process of the destruction of his fetters, as well as the revelation of his divine essence.

It is now proposed to discuss the implications of the terms expressing the spiritual knowledge (*jñāna*) that the *guru* is said to 'implant' into the intellect of the embodied disciple in the seminal form of a *mantra* (sacred word) during his initiation (*dīkṣā*). We will

also briefly mention the nature of the different kinds of *mantras* that we come across in our daily as well as our spiritual life, as well as the manner in which the 'implanted' *mantra* is used by the disciple in his spiritual practices as directed by his *guru*, culminating in the revelation of supreme integral knowledge (*akhaṇḍajñāna*), illumining his intellect.

Meaning of the term '*mantra*'

In the *Nirukta* (an etymological dictionary of Vedic words), Yāska provided us with the etymological meaning of the term *mantra*: '*mantra*' signifies that which saves a person from taking recourse in reflection (*manana*), a kind of intellectual activity (*mananāt trāṇatā*). Abhinavagupta accepted this etymological meaning of Yāska, while discussing the meaning of the word from the point of view of Kashmir Śaivism. In his commentary of the *Mīmāṁsā Sūtra* of Jaimini (quoted by M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj), Śabara improves the etymological definition of *mantra* by adding a few very significant qualifiers. The derivative means of the term *mantra* he gives as follows: "*mantrādi cinmarīcayaḥ tadvācakatvād vaikharī varṇavīlasa bhūtanam vidyānām mananāt trāṇatā*". That is, *mantras* and the like are of the nature of the effulgence of the consciousness-light (*cinmarīcayaḥ*); the word in its gross form (i.e. ordinary words used by the common man in his daily life) called *vaikharī varṇa* denotes the highest and purest spiritual knowledge embodying the consciousness-light within them (i.e. *varṇa*). When spoken, this word saves people from [the trouble of] resorting to intellectual reflection to understand its real import. To put this into other words, the *mantras* we hear or use in its *vaikharī* or gross verbal form contain within their bosoms the effulgence of the consciousness-light, which shines forth when the potency 'lying dormant in it' is aroused — that is, when the outer cover encasing the consciousness-light is broken open by the *guru* at the time of initiation (*dīkṣā*). The *mantras* disciples receive and use during their spiritual practice provide them with the opportunity to obtain direct visions of the light of consciousness; when the *mantras*

are used as instruments for the revelation of consciousness (*caitanya*) contained therein, the disciple is not required to look for any spiritual knowledge from other external sources. This is what the expression *trāṇatā* ('saving') signifies as used by Śabara in his commentary.

Kinds of *mantra* and their use in *sādhanā*

The word *mantra* is a generic term connoting different shades of meaning in different contexts; *mantras* are used by people of different walks of life for various purposes. For instance, devout religiously-minded persons utter *mantras* to propitiate their favourite deity (*iṣṭadevatā*) over the course of their daily worship. These *mantras* are drawn from different sources: Purāṇas, *stotra* (devotional) texts, and so on. It is impossible to conduct the social rites called *daśa-karma* ('ten kinds of rites') — including the ceremonial tonsure of a young child, the sacred thread ceremony, marriage, or offering food to departed ancestors — without using the *mantras* prescribed in the treatises about *dharmaśāstra*. These *mantras* are borrowed freely from different texts, however, and do not play any role in the spiritual upliftment of the *sādhaka*. The reason for this is that such *mantras* are devoid of any 'potency' (*vīrya*), hence are irrelevant in the context of our present discussion.

Before we take up the discussion of the nature of *mantra* in Tantric *sādhanā*, it would perhaps be useful if we give an overview of the development of the concept of *mantra* from the Vedic times onwards. When we study Vedic literature to find out when and how the term '*mantra*' was first used, we find it was first used to denote the 'spontaneous verbal outbursts' of Vedic seers upon obtaining their vision of the spiritual truth by means of their 'inner eye' (*ārṣacakṣu*). The Vedic seers are traditionally called *mantradraṣṭā*, 'the seers of *mantra*' — in this context, meaning 'the spiritual truth'. They spontaneously articulated their deep and sublime experiences of the truth in their own words before their disciples. As ordinary words were incapable of conveying their deep and complex visions, they had to employ symbolic language, pregnant with deeper implications which

were later difficult to grasp by ordinary minds. Nonetheless, they contained the condensed vision of truth; the disciples of the Vedic seers had the privilege of hearing Vedic *mantras* coming directly from the lips of these seers of truth, hence they could immediately grasp their 'inner' meaning. The Vedic *mantras* had the 'denotative power' hidden within them, which was 'stirred up', as it were, as the Vedic seers uttered them before their disciples. This led to the revelation of the truth which, as a result of their *saṅkalpa* (conscious resolve) for revelation, was conveyed in the form of *mantra*. Others who later succeeded these direct disciples were not able to decipher the hidden meanings in the Vedic *mantras* but, realizing their 'sacredness' of their being uttered by seers, they made great efforts to preserve their outward verbal structure, then orally passed them on to their own disciples — thus the process of oral transmission started. The Vedic *mantras*, embodying the esoteric experiences of the Vedic seers, came down orally through a succession of disciples without any 'distortion' — but their true meaning remained 'hidden'. However, some seekers of spiritual truth largely succeeded in decoding their hidden meaning, by elevating themselves to that level of consciousness on which the supreme truth was 'seen' by the seers. Sri Aurobindo and Srimat Anirvan are two such well-known examples in our times who developed extraordinary powers through their *sādhanā*, enabling them to intuitively grasp their hidden meaning. They have conveyed their findings in their writings.

Seen from the point of view of their verbal structure, the Vedic *mantra*s are mostly complete multi-word sentences which are difficult for spiritual practitioners to use for their spiritual elevation. The *Brāhmaṇa* texts have found their utility, however, in the performance of different kinds of sacrifices to obtain mundane results. The focus of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts is to secure the mundane welfare of the sacrificers; they are not concerned with the spiritual life of man in the least.

However, surprisingly a few *mantras* in the *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā* (II, 3, 12) and in the *Atharvaveda Saṁhitā* (IX, 25, 27) refer to a theory

pertaining to the nature of *vāk* — speech — which has deep spiritual ramifications. It mentions four levels of *vāk* within the *mantra*, but neither specifies what these levels of speech are, nor whether these levels have any relevance in the spiritual field. Taking his cue from these Vedic *mantras*, Bhartṛhari, the celebrated grammarian philosopher (c. 5th century C.E.) formulated the philosophy of *vāk* as 'the primordial word' in his famous work, the *Vākyapadīya*. He says that the four levels of *vāk* are *parā*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā* and *vaikharī*, in a descending order from subtlest to grossest.

Whereas *vaikharī* represents *vāk* in its grossest phase, the form we use for communication in our daily life, the other three forms are very subtle, and are therefore beyond the reach of the mind. *Parā*, *paśyantī* and *madhyamā* represent the *śakti* which is 'encoded' within the gross *vaikharī*. This *śakti* which underlies the *vaikharī vāk* is said to be the *vīrya* (potency) innate within the ordinary word. In this context, it may be mentioned that some *yogins* are well-known for possessing 'miraculous' powers, concentrating on the *vaikharī* form to unlock the 'potency' within the word and thereby materializing the appropriate gross objects it denotes. There are several instances of the demonstration of this amazing feat by some *yogins* — a miracle which cannot otherwise be explained. This is true not only of Indian *yogins*, but also of spiritual masters of other traditions outside India. For example, it is said in the (Christian and Jewish) Bible that the Lord said "Let there be light" and there was light, illuminating and revealing everything. It might appear as miraculous to the ignorant, but it can be explained on the basis of the theory of *vāk*.

Let us now turn our attention to the *mantra*, the role it plays in the spiritual life of a seeker of truth, and the manner in which it secures their spiritual elevation. It is well known that, during initiation (*dīkṣā*), the *guru* 'implants' the *mantra* into the psycho-physical apparatus of the embodied disciple, after it is purged of impurities or defilements (*malas*). The Advaita Śaivas of Kashmir hold that during initiation, when the divine *mantra* is implanted into the disciple, divine grace flows into the seeker from the supreme Lord through

the *guru*, and at that very moment the thick crust of the fundamental defilement of *āṇavamala* gets 'broken'. It is said that when the *guru* 'gives' him the *mantra* for use in his spiritual practice (as with the repetition of *mantra* (*japa*) while performing *prāṇāyāma*, or during meditation (*dhyāna*)), he first arouses the *śakti* or potency embedded within the *mantra*, and thereby 'enlivens' the *mantra*, drawing consciousness-energy (*caitanya śakti*) from the *parā vāk*. The *guru* alone has access to that level of *parā vāk* from which he can 'draw' the *śakti* and transform the gross *vaikharī* form of the *mantra* into what has been called the *caitanya mantra* — *mantra* which has been made 'alive' with the arousal of the *śakti* latent within it. This interpretation of *mantra śakti* given by Tantric masters is in conformity with the tenets of the Kriyā Yoga that they advocate.

It may be mentioned here that the Vedic tradition prescribing the path of spiritual knowledge as a mode of *sādhanā* to be followed by *sādhaka*s held similar views about the role of *mantra*. The *Saṁhitā* texts of the Yajurveda refer to the *haṁsa mantra*, which was used by spiritual practitioners. In this context, it could be noted that Kṣemarāja quotes a verse (in his commentary on the *Śivasūtra* III, 27) which states how every living being is naturally repeating the *haṁsa mantra* without being conscious of it. "When a man exhales with the sound '*sa*' and inhales with the sound '*ha*', he involuntarily repeats the *mantra* '*haṁsaḥ*'." Normally, he repeats this mantra 21,600 times each day; this is called *ajapājapa*, but it does not yield any fruit, on account of its involuntary nature. It is held that only through the conscious observation or awareness (*anusandhāna*) of this mechanical action can one use the power lying innate in this *mantra* for spiritual elevation. The term *haṁsa* spells '*so'ham*' ("That I am") arranged in reverse; this *mantra* was capable of bringing about self-realisation in spiritual practitioners as meaning *aham brahmāsmi*, "I am the *brāhman*". It is analogous to the Upaniṣadic concept of the *mahāvākyas*, great phrases which convey spiritual experiences along different steps; these ideas about the role of *mantra* in *sādhanā* are implicit there.

The role of the *mahāvākyas* in the *sādhanā* laid down in the Upaniṣads needs a little elaboration. It is said that as soon as the *guru* utters the *mantra* '*tattvamasi*' ("you are That") to the disciple who has acquired all the qualities needed to follow the path of knowledge and who also succeeded in fully cleansing his *antaḥkaraṇa*, the disciple grasps the highest spiritual knowledge contained in this great *mantra* through reflection (*manana*) — a deep and continued reflection (*nidhidhyāsana*) from within a trance (a *savikalpa* kind of *samādhi*). The great word contains within its verbal form the potency (*śakti*) which is spontaneously manifested the moment the *guru* utters it. He immediately begins experiencing '*aham brahmāsmī*'. This is called the *anubhavavākya*, an expression which conveys the highest spiritual experience. The expression conveying the spiritual experience of the *sādhaka* is, in fact, an echo of the *haṁsa mantra* ('*so'ham*') mentioned in the Vedic *Saṁhitā* text. As the *sādhaka* turns around to experience his surroundings, he discovers the presence of his consciousness-nature (*caitanya*) everywhere (*sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma*). His entire surroundings are experienced as having undergone a complete change. His own being-experience expands from an individual being-experience into the universal one of the *brahman*. He is filled with ecstatic delight. When he reaches the peak of his spiritual path, his individual being-experience melts into the universal; that indescribable state of spiritual realization, the Advaita Śaivites of Kashmir call pure '*bodha*' (self-experience). The *sādhaka* then gets immersed into his fullness-nature (*akhaṇḍa svarupa*).

It is clear from this brief account of the modes of spiritual discipline followed by both Tantric and Vedic *sādhakas* that the *mantras* 'given' by the *guru* to their disciples play a pivotal role in their spiritual elevation, culminating in the achievement of the ultimate goal.

Let us now turn our attention to another aspect of the nature of *mantra*, namely the structural aspect. We have already mentioned that the Vedic *mantras* comprised of complete sentences. It is obvious that the multi-word Vedic *mantra* which embodies the truth expe-

rienced by the Vedic seers cannot be used by *sādhakas* for spiritual elevation. Their *mantras* must be short, so that they can be easily uttered or conceived during *japa* or meditation. We find *mantras* which are comprised of a few words in later texts, like the *Purāṇas* and in devotional poems. But these have also not been found to be useful for *sādhakas* to perform *sādhanā*.

On the other hand, the Tantric *bījamantras* have found favour with practitioners of spiritual discipline. The *bījamantras* represent certain speech sounds called *mātṛkā varṇas*, which have coalesced together and put into their 'encased form' (*sampuṭita*). Since *bīja-mantras* are comprised of *mātṛkā varṇas*, the letters which symbolize the consciousness-force (*śakti*), these *bījamantras* describe the very consciousness energy encased within them which, used properly during *sādhanā*, is capable to generate in the *sādhaka* an experience of the real consciousness-nature. The *bījamantras* are likened to 'seeds' which, when implanted in the pure psycho-physical framework of a *sādhaka* by his *guru*, fructify over the course of his *sādhanā* and produce the desired result.

The origin of *bījamantras* can be traced back to Vedic times: the *praṇavamantra* is a classic example of a Vedic *bījamantra*. As is well known, the *Māṇḍukyopaniṣad* explains the significance of *praṇava-mantra* in philosophical terms. Tantric texts mention many *bīja-mantras*, collected from various texts and listed in the *Mantrā-bhidhānakośa*, a dictionary of *mantras*, with short explanations.

We do not know how exactly the *bījamantras* came to be: were they created by some unknown human author? We do come across a reference in the first Āhnika of Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka*, which gives the probable origin of the *bījamantra*. There it is said that the *bījamantras* originated from *sañjalpa* — sounds escaping involuntarily from the lips of a *yogin* during the period between their state of trance (*samādhi*) and a normal state of awareness. At that time, the *yogin* is then in a half-trance, half-waking state, in a spiritually intoxicated state, with no conscious control over his senses. It is believed that during *samādhi*, the *yogin* has wonderful spiritual visions

which he is unable or unwilling to articulate. He only mutters something which apparently do not convey any meaning. These apparently meaningless sounds, condensed or juxtaposed one over another by nearby witnesses, constitute what we know as the *bījamantras*. These *mantras* contain natural 'potency', or *śakti*, having been uttered by a *yogin*, being therefore capable of revealing the power of *caitanya śakti*.

Abhinavagupta provides some corroborative evidence for this explanation, from the spiritual life of many *sādhakas*. Pātañjala Yoga also refers to *sañjalpa* (the muttering of sounds), indicative of deep spiritual experiences of *yogins* in the state of *samprajñāta samādhi*, yet does not talk about the origin of *bījamantras*, for obvious reasons.

4. Concepts of Time (*kāla*) and Space (*deśa*) in Advaita Śaiva thought

It is generally acknowledged that everything that exists on the mundane plane is conditioned by time (*kāla*) and space (*deśa*). Every act and every movement of every sentient being and material object in the world is governed by time and space — a fact experienced by everyone. Though we are aware of the existence of time and space as adjuncts of all that exists in the world, we are ignorant about their genesis, nature and status in the scheme of creation of the world.

Let us therefore explore the thoughts of different orthodox schools of Indian philosophy to see if we can get any answers from them regarding these questions. Though the exponents of the orthodox schools are aware of the existence of time and space as ontological concepts and of the extent these influence the life of man at the mundane level, it is surprising to find that, philosophically, most of these schools overlook them and their roles. The only exceptions to this apathetic attitude towards these concepts of time and space are the realist schools of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophies, which not only admit their existence but also examine their nature, assigning them their rightful place within their scheme of metaphysics.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas admit time and space as ontological entities, assigning them a place in the category of substance (*dravya*). Being external (*nitya*) and all-pervasive or universal in nature, as qualifying adjuncts they affect every object of knowledge. Though time (*kāla*) is conceived as something which flows perenially, like unobstructed water in stream, we perceive it in three forms, as the past, the present and the future, associated with the objects of experience as their qualifying objects. Space is also associated with objects existing on the mundane plane, qualifying experiences with concepts like 'far' and 'near', proximity and distance.

Let us now turn our attention to the views on this subject held by the Advaita Śaivites of Kashmir. Though they do not give ontological categories to time and space as they do for the other *tattvas* which constitute the universe, they trace their origin to the process of the unfolding of the universe by the supreme Lord. The Advaita Śaiva texts trace the origin of time and space to *prāṇa śakti*, which also serves as their locus (*āśraya*).

As it has already been observed in the section in the chapter about the nature of *prāṇa*, the *saṁvid* or the supreme experiencing principle imposes limitation on itself to manifest itself as the universe, and the two aspects — one static and the other dynamic, one Śiva and the other *śakti* — become contracted (*saṅkucita*). *Prāṇa śakti* is born out of this self-created contraction of *saṁvid śakti* (consciousness power). Since *saṁvid śakti* is held to be ever-pulsating (*spandita*), *prāṇa śakti* is held to be ever-active; its activity is described as a regular pulsation without any lengthy pause (*avirata spandana*). *Saṁvid* is said to be dominant in *kriyā śakti*.

Time (*kāla*) and space (*deśa*) are said to manifest within the world-creation (*sṛṣṭi*) in two distinct forms: in their subtle forms, arising directly from the pulsation or vibration of *saṁvid śakti* in the pure realm of the *mahāmāyā*, and in their gross form, in the impure realm of *māyā*, just below the *mahāmāyā*. Time and space, when operating in their subtle forms in *mahāmāyā*, do not function as power-filled bondage to pure experients like the *mantra*

maheśvara, *mantreśvara* and *mantra* existing on the levels of the *śuddha adhva*; therefore, their presence is not felt by the experients (*pramātā*) there.

However, time and space manifested within the impure *aśuddha adhva* in their gross form within *māyā* bind the self-contracted *aśuddha pramāta* (or *cidaṇu*); therefore, these are called 'bonds' (*pāśa*) and are included in the list of *kañcukas* (sheaths or covers). The disembodied *pralayakāla* experients and the embodied *sakala* experients existing in *māyā* are grossly wrapped within time and space by the *kañcukas* which govern their very existence and activities. Therefore, their presence is experienced even within the *prāṇa śakti*, which constitutes the very life of *sakalas*. Since the *pralayakalas* are bereft of any physical body, *prāṇa śakti* is also nonexistent for them, though they be covered by *āṇava* and *māyīya malas*, of which *kañcukas* are an integral part.

The pulsating *prāṇa śakti* is said to be continuously yet spontaneously moving up and down in the form of the vital breaths (*prāṇa* and *apana vāyu*) along the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, thereby keeping the psycho-physical framework alive and pseudo-sentient (*cetanā*). Embodied beings are generally not aware of the movement of the *prāṇa* and *apāna vāyus*, and this non-perception of this movement of gross *prāṇa śakti* confers no beneficial spiritual results. But a spiritual practitioner makes a conscious effort to move the *prāṇa* within his physical body from his heart-centre (*hṛtcakra*) to the *dvādaśānta* (crown of the head) and then, after a small rest, moving it back down to the heart centre. Doing this, he has sublime spiritual experiences.

At first, a spiritual practitioner will watch the movement of his *prāṇa* only as his inhalation and exhalation, but when he concentrates his attention as a part of *sādhanā* on these two breaths, he will discover the presence of time and space therein, within *prāṇa* and *apāna*, in their extremely subtle form, perceived in their upward and downward movements. He will discover sixteen divisions in the progression of the movement of *prāṇa*, called *tuti* (units of time). These divisions

represent one 'day'. Likewise he notices sixteen divisions in the duration of the movement of *apana*, expressed as exhalation, constituting one 'night'. 'Day' and 'night' are marked by the presence and absence of internal illumination during the *sādhaka*'s inhalation and exhalation.

It is held by Advaita Śaivites that the course along which the *prāṇa* and *apāna vayus* move measures thirty six *aṅgulis* ('fingers'; digits of spatial measurement). Herein lies the origin and existence of space inside *prāṇa* within the embodied being: the *yogin* is said to experience the time and space of *prāṇa* both in their microcosmic form — when he looks within — and in their macrocosmic form — when he directs his attention outside himself, to the universe.

Advaita Śaivites describe how *yogins* experience the passage of time in terms of *tuti* (the smallest unit of time), hours (aggregate of *tuṭis*), *prahara* (made up of four *tutis*), days, nights, and so on. *Sādhakas* internally experience these units of time during meditation, and otherwise externally within the cosmic *prāṇa*. The *yogin* also experiences *sandhyā* (twilight time) at the junction of two *praharas*, which lasts for only half a *tuti*. They also experience 'months' comprised of thirty *tithis* (units of time expressed in lunar terms) with broad divisions of two fortnights, one bright and one dark, depending on if *prāṇa* and *apāna* operates within them. The 'bright' fortnight (*śuklapakṣa*) comprised of the *tithis* beginning with *pratipat* and ending in *pūrṇimā* (the night of the full moon) is said to arise from the movement of *prāṇa* along *īḍā*; the 'dark' fortnight (*kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*) is said to arise for the movement of *apāna vāyu* along *piṅgala*, comprised of the *tithis* from *pratipat* to on *amāvasyā* (the new moon day). In this way time (*kāla*) arises from the movement of *prāṇa* and *apana* along the two *nāḍīs* of *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, and is experienced internally by the *yogin*.

The same is the case with space (*deśa*), which also arises within as a result of movement of *prāṇa* and *apāna* within *nāḍīs*, measured in spatial terms.

In both his *Tantrāloka* and his *Tantrasāra*, Abhinavagupta gave

additional temporal descriptions, like *uttarāyana* (time measured in terms of movement of the sun in the northern hemisphere) and *dakṣināyana* (time measured in terms of movement of the sun in the southern hemisphere), *samvatsara* ('one year') and the like, which are located in *prāṇa* and experienced by *yogins* inside them. The 'sun' and the 'moon' are internally experienced by *yogins* as shining in the sky of *caitanya* (*cidākāśa*) when they succeed in focusing their gaze inwardly.

The descriptions of time and space linked with the innermost *prāṇa* and *apāna* as described by these Advaita Śaiva writers have deeper implications for *sādhana*: the spiritual practitioner is advised to overcome the hurdles imposed by time and space by equalizing the movements of their *prāṇa* and *apāna*, thereby merging them into *kuṇḍalinī śakti* as it rises with great velocity up *suṣumnā* to unite with *saṁvid śakti* and Śiva (*saṁvid*) at the *sahasrāra*. Advaita Śaivites hold that this mode of *sādhanā* based on *kriyā śakti* is the easiest way to realize one's true consciousness nature (*saṁvid-svabhava*).

Time and space as experienced by common man are only a projection of what the *yogin*s experience within in the 'sky of their consciousness' (*cidākāśa*) during their *sādhanā*. External time and space is governed by the movement of celestial bodies in the firmament and the rotation of the earth; all these affect man's life on the mundane plane.

The reason these Advaita Śaiva texts give such graphic descriptions of how time and space are experienced by *yogins* during the part of their *sādhanā* called *prāṇoccāra* (included under *anavopaya*) appears to be twofold: one, to demonstrate to the *sādhaka* the best means to gain access to their essensial Śiva nature, and second, to reveal the way to transcend the barriers of time and space to become *deśa kālātita* (beyond time and space). This is also reflected in their unconventional conceptualization of the goddess Kālī, as the deity causing the 'contraction of time' (*kāla saṁkarṣiṇī*), paving the path beyond time.

5. *Nāda, bindu* and *kalā*

The Sanskrit word *nāda* literally means sound (*dhvani*). It manifests in two distinct forms, as articulate sound (*āhata dhvani*) and as inarticulate sound (*anāhata dhvani*). Articulate sound is seen to arise from striking one solid object with another, or by the friction caused by air over a vocal cord; it can be grasped by the auditory sense organ when produced artificially and consciously by living beings. This kind of articulate sound (*āhata dhvani*) has no spiritual significance whatsoever.

Inarticulate sound (*anāhata dhvani*), or *nāda*, is an altogether different kind of sound: subtle, and said to arise naturally and perpetually within every embodied being's physical body. By nature it is subtle, and therefore is incapable of being heard through the human auditory sense organ. The *Svacchanda Tantra* sheds light on the nature of *anāhata dhvani* or *nāda* in this way:

"There is none who produces this particular kind of sound by uttering it (*uccārayitā*), nor is there anything that can stop its production. The divine being residing in the heart of all living beings himself 'utters' [produces] it."

In his *Tantrāloka* (Ah. V, 131) Abhinavagupta traces the origin of *nāda* to the *uccāra* ('an upward rise') of the *prāṇa* which 'produces' a sound (*dhvani*) which resembles the inarticulate sound (*anāhata dhvani*). To quote his words: "From the *uccara* of this *prāṇa* vibrates (*spandita*) an imperceptible inarticulate sound (*avyaktanukriti prāya*) [*Tantrāloka* VI, 45]". Abhinavagupta used the expression '*avyakta*' ('imperceptible') to distinguish it from other gross sounds produced by hitting one object with another, or by vocal cords. Inarticulate sound (*anāhata dhvani*) is said to be the source or cause of the gross forms of the *varṇas* which constitute every word used to communicate our ideas; hence, inarticulate sounds are also called '*varṇa*'. Abhinavagupta speaks about *nāda* vis-à-vis *varṇa* in his *Tantrāloka* (VI, 216) in this way: "There is only one *varṇa* in the form of *nāda* [inarticulate sound] in which all *varṇas* exist in a fused form. As it said to arise within all beings ceaselessly, it is called '*anāhata*', the

un-struck, natural and uncaused sound. In his commentary on this verse, Jayaratha explains the purport of these words. "In this imperceptible, inarticulate *anāhata nāda* exist all *varṇas*, fused inseparably. As *anāhata nāda* is the source of all the *varṇas*, the *anāhata nāda* is also given the name *varṇa*."

In this context, it may be mentioned that Śaṇkarācārya in his *Yogatārāvalī* made reference to *nādānusandhāna*, an expression which occurs in some Tantra texts as well as other works of the Haṭha Yoga tradition. What does this expression really signify? The word *anusandhāna*, which signifies a particular kind of technique employed by some *yogins*, involves the idea of 'searching'. *Nādānusandhāna* signifies the attempt made by *yogins* to 'search' for the *nāda* whih arises naturally within all embodied beings, resulting in focusing all their attention inwardly. It is a form of *yoga* called *dhvani yoga* or *varṇa yoga*, practiced by many medieval saints. Kabir refers to this, calling it *surati sabda yoga*.

One might ask how a *sādhaka* can become aware of it. Abhinavagupta tells us that *sṛṣṭi bīja* and *samhārabīja* are its main forms. What does these two terms denote? '*Sa*' is the *sṛṣṭi bīja*, the mystic letter denoting exhalation, and '*ha*' is the *saṁhāra bīja*, denoting inhalation. The adjectives '*sṛṣṭī*' and '*saṁhāra*' signify the main points for the revelation of *nāda*.

In his commentary called the *Vimarśinī* on the *Śiva sūtra* (*sū*. 27 of the 3rd *āhnika*), Kṣemarāja describes the process of the revelation of *nāda* through exhalation and inhalation: "breath is exhaled with the sound '*sa*' and inhaled with the sound '*ha*'. Therefore, embodied men on this mundane plane ceaselessly repeat this *mantra* which is called *haṁsa*. They repeat this mantra 21,600 times every day and every night. The repetition of this *mantra* which belongs to the goddess (Gāyatrī) has been prescribed; this is easy for the wise, but difficult for the dull-headed."

This involuntary repetition of *haṁsa mantra* is also called *ajapā japa*. It is said that when a *sādhaka* directs his attention to this ceaseless form of *japa* and becomes aware of it by *anusandhāna*

(conscious observation), he succeeds in equalizing the two breaths. As a result of this *kuṇḍalinī śakti*, asleep on the *mūlādhāra cakra*, wakes and begins to move up through *suṣumnā* to merge with Śiva above the *sahasrāra*. The *sādhaka* then 'hears' different pleasant sounds within the *nāda*.

The *Nādabindu Upaniṣad* and Abhinavagupta (in his *Tantrāloka*, Ah. VI) describe ten forms of *anāhata nāda* as heard by the *sādhakas*: as resembling: 1) *cin*, or a murmuring; 2) *cincin* or a louder hum; 3) a shrill sound, similar to that made by a cricket (*ciravaka*); 4) a sound like one from a conch shell; 5) sound from a flute; 6) sound from a stringed instrument; 7) sound from a bell; 8) the sound of thunder; 9) sound resembling the roar of a lion; 10) the sound produced by a percussion instrument. Different *sādhakas* 'hear' *anāhata nāda* within in any of the ten forms enumerated above.

A careful study of these ten ways in which the *anāhata nāda* is heard by different *sādhakas* would demonstrate the varying nature in the pitch of *anāhata nāda*, from a low, almost inaudible noise, to the loudest. Ten forms of *nāda* enumerated above represent inarticulate sound in its gross form as witnessed by the *sādhakas*. The *nāda* is subtle in nature, representing the *madhyamā* stage; when the same *nāda* reaches *paśyanti*, it is no longer audible. Then, *nāda* is transformed into illumination (*jyoti*) which is experienced by the *sādhaka* once they attain perfection in their *sādhanā*; when the *sādhaka* is able to have the self-experience of *pūrṇāhamtā* (the highest I-experience), the experience of the different *anāhata nāda* sounds dissolve therein.

We have referred to the *haṁsa mantra*, which figures in different Vedic *Saṁhitās*. In its highest form, the *anāhata nāda* is represented in the Vedic tradition by *praṇava* or *auṁ*. In that tradition, it is said that *praṇava* or *omkāra* is experienced in nine different forms, representing nine steps in *yoga*, involving the *nāda* path of *sādhanā*. The stages are 1) *bindu*, the divine *śakti* in its most potential or condensed form. *Bindu* is also called *ardha mātrā*; 2) *ardha candra*, subtler than the preceding one; 3) *rodhini*; 4) *nāda*; 5) *śakti*; 7) *vyapinī*; 8) *samanā*; 9) *unmanā*. It is the highest stage, in which a *sādhaka* experiences

not only his real self but where he has also realized the world to be an aspect or extension of the self. On the level of *unmanā*, *māyā* has ceased; *māyā* functions up to *samana*. The *Svacchanda Tantra* says that *sahaja vidyā* is not different from *unmanā*.

(The technical terms used to describe these nine steps of spiritual elevation are esoteric in nature; it is therefore not possible to translate them into any familiar language. These, therefore, have been left untranslated).

Glossary of Technical Terms in Sanskrit

Note: the terms are arranged in the order of the Roman alphabet.

a : Symbol of Śiva, short form of *anuttara* (the Supreme *tattva*); the first letter of the *devanāgarī* alphabet held to be underlying all the other letters of the alphabet.

adhva : Literally means path, but is used in the context of cosmogony to signify sphere or realm in the creation. It is twofold: *śuddha adhva* sphere manifested as a result of the functioning of the divine Śakti as the pure consciousness power; and *aśuddha adhva*, the impure sphere manifested as a result of the function of the divine Śakti in impure form, i.e. as *māyā* and *prakṛti śaktis*.

aghora : The merciful Śiva.

aghoreśa : The presiding deity of impure levels of creation (*aśuddha tattvas*), called Anantanātha.

aham : I-experience.

ahaṁkāra : Ego-experience; it is held to be a thought construct (*vikalpa*) arising from the imposition of self on the not-self (*anātmani ātmabodha*).

ahaṁtā : I-consciousness, the self-reflective experience as I-ness.

ajñānam : The primal limitation. *Ajñāna* in this school does not mean absence of knowledge but contracted knowledge. It is of two kinds — *pauruṣa ajñāna*, the limited knowledge arising in the limited individual being from self-contraction (*ātma saṅkoca*), located in the limited being (*puruṣa*) as a consequence of which his powers of knowledge (*jñāna*) and activity (*kriyā*) are contracted; and *bauddha ajñāna* (ignorance inherent in the intellect which is responsible for the experience of not-self in the self (*anātmani ātmabodha*), technically called *aśuddha vikalpa* (impure or false thought constructs).

akhyāti : Ignorance, primal ignorance.

akrama : The manifestation of the essential nature spontaneously or without any succession.

akula : Śiva (lit. beyond *kula* symbolising Śakti).

ānanda śakti : Consciousness power in the form of bliss, responsible for producing bliss-experience; the letter *ā* symbolises this bliss-power.

ānanda upāya : Realisation of the Śiva nature spontaneously without undertaking any spiritual discipline; also called *anupāya*.

anāśrita Śiva : The state of Śiva in which the universe stands negated.

āṇavamala : (Lit. defilement caused by self-contraction); primal limitation that causes the limited individual being to forget their true Śiva-nature; primary limitation that causes universal consciousness to contracted consciousness, thus bringing about the experience of imperfection in fettered beings or *paśus*.

aṇu : The self-contracted; *cidaṇu* — the self-contracted spiritual monad.

anugraha : The Grace of the Lord causing negation of the self-imposed contraction (*saṅkoca*) in the limited beings.

anuttara : The Supreme Reality as the Transcendent Absolute (lit. beyond that nothing exists).

apāna : The vital breath that goes in downwards towards the anus; the inhaled air.

ātma viśrānti : Resting in the Self.

avikalpa jñāna : *Nirvikalpa* experience caused by the direct realisation of the Reality without any mental activity.

baindivīkalā : Lit. power pertaining to *bindu*; the power of the divine Śakti (*kalā*) that enables the Supreme Lord to always remain the knower and never an object of knowledge.

bandha : Bondage; limited knowledge; knowledge based on primal ignorance.

bauddha ajñāna : See under *bauddha jñāna*.

bauddha jñāna : Pure knowledge arising in the intellect of the spiritual seeker who has experienced his essence or Śiva-nature. It is said to be in the form of the experience of Self in the real self (*ātmani ātmabodha*).

Bhairava (para) : Parama Śiva; this is an anacrostic word, in which *bhā* signifies *bharaṇa*, the maintenance of the world, *ra* or *ravaṇa* the withdrawal of the world and *va* or *vamana*, the projection of the world.

Bhairava Āgama : 64 Śaivāgamas that propagate non-dualistic thought.

bhāvanā : Creative contemplation; mentally viewing oneself and every object of knowledge as Śiva.

bhoga : Experience, sometimes used to convey the meaning of enjoyment.

bhoktā : Experient.

bhūcarī : A kind of the divine Śakti called Vāmeśvarī connected with the *bhāvas* or existent objects.

bhūmikā : Role.

bhūta : Gross physical element.

bhūvana : Abodes within the universe, there are 108 *bhūvanas* in creation.

bīja : *Bīja śakti*: the highest *śakti* constituting the root cause of the universe; *bīja mantra*: the mystical letter forming the essential part of the *mantra* of a deity; *bīja varṇa*: the first letter '*a*' in the vowel letters of the *devanāgarī* alphabet symbolising *anuttara caitanya*.

bindu : (Also written as *vindu*); a metaphysical point; compact mass of *Śakti* (*ghanībhūta śakti*) concentrated into an undifferentiated point ready to create, symbolised by a *dot*; esoteric meaning — the divine Śakti in highly potentialised form; signified by the *anusvāra* letter in the *devanāgarī* alphabet.

Brahma or ***Brahman*** : The all-pervasive foundational consciousness, devoid of activity (in Śaṅkara Vedānta); pure foundational consciousness full of unrestricted power to know and do (in Advaita Śaiva philosophy) equivalent of Parama Śiva.

brahmanāḍī : The central channel through which the vital energy (*prāṇa śakti*) flows; also called *suṣumnā*.

brahmarandhra : The topmost abode of Śakti in the body of embodied beings; also called *sahasrāra cakra*.

buddhi : The sense organ called intellect; the locus of all experiences by fettered embodied beings.

buddhīndriya : The five sense faculties for perception of smell, taste, seeing, feeling by touch and hearing; also called *jñānendriya*.

caitanya: The foundational consciousness processing the absolute freedom (*śakti*) of knowing (*jñāna*) and doing (*kriyā*).

camatkāra : Delight of artistic experience symbolising the bliss of I-Consciousness.

candra : The channel for the movement of *prāṇa śakti* as *apāna*; symbol of the object of knowledge.

cit : The foundational consciousness; the Absolute.

citi : The consciousness-power of the Absolute responsible for the manifestation of the world.

citta : Inner sense faculty in an embodied being; the universal consciousness contracted to form the individual mind.

dik : Space.

dikcarī : A form of Vāmeśvarī connected with outer-sense.

dīkṣā : The rite of initiation of the disciple by the spiritual teacher (*guru*) by which spiritual knowledge is given (*dīyate jñānasadbhāva*) and the grip of defilements in the disciple are loosened (*kṣīyate*).

gocarī : A form of the divine Śakti Vāmeśvarī connected with the manifestation of *antaḥkaraṇa* or the inner sense organ in embodied beings.

grāhaka : Experient, subject.

grāhya : Object of experience.

guṇa : The constituents of *Prakṛti* (Śakti) conceived as binding the embodied being like strands in a rope (*guṇa*); the three *guṇas sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are held to be contracted forms of the three *śaktis* — *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*.

haṁsa : The *jīva* (individual being in creation).

hṛdaya : Lit. heart; the abode of consciousness in the embodied individuals; the light of consciousness existing as the substratum of all manifestation (*citprakāśa*).

icchā śakti : The divine Śakti as the power of will inherent in the Supreme Lord.

idantā : Lit. this-ness — consciousness experienced in the form of object.

indu : Symbol of *prameya* or object; *prāṇavāyu* as *apāna*.

Īśvara : The second *tattva* in creation; fourth *tattva* from the highest; the self-experience of the Supreme Lord on this level is — "this am I" (*idameva aham*); the *jñāna śakti* is prominent on this level.

Īśvara-bhaṭṭāraka : The presiding deity of the *Mantra maheśvara* experient residing on the level of *Īśvara tattva*.

madhya (nāḍī) : *Suṣumnā* or central channel for movement of the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* in the physical body of the spiritual seeker.

madhyamā : A form of the *Parāvāk* constituting the third step in the descending order, prior to its manifestation in gross form (*vaikharī vāk*).

mahāmayā : The divine Śakti functioning in pure form above the level of *māyā* (*māyopari mahāmāyā*).

Maheśvara : The highest lord or Paramaśiva.

mala : Defilements enveloping the spiritual monads (*cidaṇus*); three kinds of *malas* or defilements are admitted viz., *āṇavamala*, primary defilement (*mūlamala*) caused by voluntary self-contraction (*ātmasaṅkoca*) by the Supreme Lord; *māyīyamala*, secondary defilement caused by the veiling of the spiritual monads by *Māyā* and her progeny of five *kañcukas* or sheaths of ignorance; *kārmamala*, third kind of defilement caused by clinging of *kārmic* seeds (*karma bīja*) floating in the level below *śuddha vidyā* and responsible for providing a psycho-physical body to the spiritual monads, making them embodied beings or *sakalas*.

manas : A constituent of *antaḥkaraṇa* controlling the activity of both the cognitive instruments (*jñānendriyas*) and cognitive instruments (*karmendriyas*); locus of building up of images, concepts and intentions (*saṅkalpa*) and thought constructs (*vikalpa*).

mantra : Sacred word or formula for repetition by the spiritual seekers; it is derived in two ways — *manānat trāyate*, i.e. that which saves one from undertaking reflection on the Supreme, and that which induces reflection on the Supreme (*manana*) and also provides protection (*trāṇa*) from endless transmigration.

mantra maheśvara : Pure experient existing on the level of *Sadāśivatattva*.

mantra śakti : Power inherent in the sacred word that reveals the spiritual Truth (Śiva); *mantra vīrya-parāvāk* inherent in the sacred word (*mantra*).

mantreśvara : Pure experient existing on the level of *Īśvara tattva*.

mātṛkā : Lit., the little mother who protects; letter endowed with the potency of revealing knowledge innate in it; *Parāvāk* innate in the letters symbolising the different *tattvas*.

māyā : *Māyā* is conceived both as *tattva* (level of creation) and as *śakti* (power). *Māyā* as *tattva* signifies that level of universal manifestation on which the experience of multiplicity, differentiation and discreteness makes its appearance; *māyā* as *śakti* represents the finitising power of the divine Śakti of the Supreme Lord. It is conceived as the power of obscuration (*tirodhāna śakti*) in which *māyā śakti* is not alone causing obscuration of the spiritual monads (*cidaṇus*), but is helped by her progeny of five *kañcukas* (sheaths), namely *kalā*, *vidyā rāga*, *kāla* and *niyati*. The *kañcukas* exist in hierarchical order to eclipse the vestiges of divinities in the *cidaṇus* (spiritual monads). *Māyā śakti* is conceived as the sphere which causes the spiritual monads to forget their true divine nature.

māyīyamala : Defilement responsible for obscuring the true divine nature of spiritual monads.

meya : Object of knowledge (*prameya*).

nāda : The unstruck sound arising continuously in the *suṣumnā* in embodied beings and heard by the spiritual seeker performing *kuṇḍalinī yoga*.

navavarga : Pertains to the classification of the letters of the *devanāgarī* alphabet under nine heads, each symbolising a phase of divine Śakti in subtle form or group of *tattvas*. There are (i) *a-varga* group of vowel letters symbolising the divine operating in pure subtle form, beginning with *a-varṇa* and ending in *visarga varṇa*, (ii) the group of consonant letters beginning with *ka varga*, (iii) *ca-varga*, (iv) *ṭa-varga*, (v) *ta varga*, (vi) *pa-varga*, (vii) *ya varga*, (viii) *śa-varga*, (ix) dipthong *kṣa varṇa*; each symbolising different *tattvas* or levels of creation or constituent elements of the physical body of the embodied beings.

nigraha : The act of self-limitation; *nigraha kritya*, one of the five acts performed by the Supreme Lord for His self-manifestation as the universe, involving self-veiling.

nimeṣa : Lit. closing of the eyes; the dissolution of the universe (*saṁhāra*) is metaphorically described as *nimeṣa* as opposed to *unmeṣa*, the opening of the eyes by the Supreme Lord; the merger of the object into the subject caused by the functioning of *spanda śakti* within the spiritual seeker through practice of yoga.

nirvikalpa : Lit. free from *vikalpa* (ideation), devoid of all thought-constructs.

nirvṛtti: As implied by the expression *nirvṛt cit*, when the consciousness light is focussed within on itself, responsible for the experience of massive bliss (*ānanda*).

niyati : One of the five *kañcukas* operating in the sphere of *māyā*, responsible for producing the cause-effect relation; causing limitation in the form of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

pañca-kṛtya : The Supreme Lord's five-fold act viz., *nigraha* (act of self-limitation), *sṛṣṭi* (act of manifestation), *sthiti* (maintenance of manifestation), *saṁhāra* (withdrawal of manifestation), *anugraha* (act of showering grace to put an

end to this act of self-limitation). Since the Supreme performs all his acts from the level lying outside time and space (*deśa-kāla*), these acts are regarded as perennial acts on His part. There are also described as *abhāsana*, *rakti*, *vimarśana*, *vilāpana* and *bījāvasthāpana*.

pañca-śakti : The divine Śakti functioning in five fundamental forms viz., *cit*, *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*.

pañca-vaktra : Five faces of Śiva, four opening on the four directions and one above, named as Īśana, Tatpuruṣa, Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva and Aghora. These are held to be the source for the emergence of the vast corpus of Tantra-Āgamic literature.

parama Śiva : The Highest Reality, in which there is perfect equilibrium of the Śiva and Śakti aspects.

parāmarśa : Experience; seizing mentally.

parapramātā : The highest experient; Parama Śiva.

parāśakti : The highest Śakti of the Divine Being; *Citi*, *Parāvāk*.

parāvāk : The Logos, the Supreme Verbum, Ideation of the Supreme Lord on the transcendental level.

pāśa : Bondage; fetters which are threefold: *aṇava*, *māyīya* and *kārma*.

paśu : Fettered being in creation, beings enveloped by one or all the fetters *āṇava*, *māyīya* and *kārma*.

paśyanti : First step in the involution of the *Parāvāk*, *vāk śakti* descending down to cause divine view or 'seeing'; a state of *vāk* in which there is no difference between *vācya* (object of denotation) and the *vācaka* (the word denoting the object).

pauruṣa ajñāna : Primal ignorance about the real self, arising from self-contraction located in the intellect of the *paśu*.

pauruṣa jñāna : Knowledge of one's real self, i.e. Śiva nature, after the ignorance about the self is eradicated; its locus is the real self itself.

prakāśa : Lit. light; self-effulgent Illumination in the pure-consciousness; the principle of being in consciousness; the principle by which everything else is known (*prakāśya*).

prakṛti : The divine Śakti functioning on the level below *māyā śakti* as the gross power responsible for 'material' (*jaḍa*) *tattvas* beginning with the *buddhi* down to earth.

pralayākala : Disembodied experient resting in *māyātattva*, not experiencing anything; cognizant of *śūnya* or void.

prāṇa : Vital energy manifested as a result of the self-contraction of the *Saṁvid* or consciousness in the beginning of creation; *prāṇavāyu*, fivefold vital energy perceptible as breath responsible for carrying different physiological functions to sustain the physical body.

pratibhā : The faculty of intuitive knowledge regarded as the symbol of creative activity of pure consciousness.

pratyabhijñā : Re-cognition.

pratyavamarśa : Self-recognition.

pṛthvī : The gross physical element (*bhūta*) earth.

pūrṇāhaṁtā : The supreme I-experience on the part of Śiva, indicative of fullness or perfection; non-relational I-consciousness.

pūrṇatva : Perfection.

puruṣa : A kind of *tattva*; empirical self.

puryaṣṭa : Lit. city (symbolising the body), constituted by a group of eight viz., five *tanmātrās*, *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra* and *manas*; name of the subtle body in embodied beings.

rāga : One of the *kañcukas* of *māyā* responsible for creating the feeling of attachment in the *cidaṇus*.

rajas : A constituent of *Prakṛti* responsible for creating activity (*kriyā*) and disharmony among other constituents of the *Prakṛti*.

śabda-brahman : The ultimate Reality in the form of *vāk śakti*, in which state thought and word exist fused together.

ṣaḍadhvā : Six forms of manifestation viz., *mantra*, *varṇa* and *pada* on the subjective side and *kalā tattva* and *bhuvana* on the objective side. These have a role to play in Śaiva yoga.

Sadāśiva also called ***sādākhya tattva*** : The third *tattva* counting from the *Śiva tattva*; the self-experience 'I' is most prominent with the self-experience as 'this' remaining unclear; the *icchā* or will aspect of the divine Śakti.

sakala : All embodied beings (*paśus*).

Śakti : The Divine Power innate in Śiva, always pulsating (*spanda*) to manifest, to maintain the manifestation as the universe and to withdraw it; the inseparable aspect of consciousness (*caitanya*) representing its dynamic nature; its nature described as negation of the transcendent nature of the Supreme Lord (*niṣedha vyāpara rūpā*) as a consequence of which Śiva has His self-experience as *Aham* (I-experience) on the *Sadāśiva* level instead of *pūrṇāhaṁtā* as on the level of *Śivatattva* level.

śaktimān : Parama Śiva, the locus of the ever active divine power.

śakti pañcaka : The five main forms of *śaktis* of Śiva are *cit*, *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*.

śaktipāta : Descent of the divine Śakti as divine Grace, by which the hard shell of *āṇavamala* covering the *cidaṇus* is broken; *śaktipāta* or descent of *anugraha* is one of the five eternal functions of the Supreme Lord.

śakti tattva : The second *tattva* in the list of *tattvas*; both *Śiva* and *Śakti tattvas* are said to be externally existent as such lying beyond the manifestation of the universe, despite of their being counted in the list of 36 *tattvas*.

samāna : The vital *vāyu* helping in the assimilation of food; this *vāyu* brings about equilibrium between *prāṇa* and *apāna vāyus*.

sāmarāsya : State of equilibrium between Śiva and Śakti.

samāveśa : Absorption of the individual consciousness in the Divine.

saṁhāra kṛtya : One of the five eternal functions of the Supreme Lord by which He withdraws or re-absorbs His self-manifestation as the universe.

saṁvit or ***saṁvid*** : Supreme Experiencing Principle, Supreme Consciousness in which there is complete fusion of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*.

saṁvit devatās : Looking from the macrocosmic point of view the *saṁvit devatās* are *khecarī*, *gocarī*, *dikcarī* and *bhucarī*; from the microcosmic point of view the internal and external senses are the *saṁvit devatas*.

sandhāna : Union of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness through intensive awareness.

saṅkoca : Self-contraction.

sarvakartṛtva : The characteristic omnipotence in the Supreme Lord.

sarvajñatva : The characteristic omniscience in the Supreme Lord.

Śiva : The foundational *prakāśa* or consciousness illumination; *śivatattva* is the first of the 36 *tattvas*, the source of all manifestation.

soma : Symbol of *apāna vāyu*; *soma nāḍī*, also called *piṅgalā nāḍī* through which *apāna vāyu* flows.

spanda : Creative pulsation of the divine Śakti responsible for the manifestation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe.

sphurattā : A throb-like gleam of *svātantrya śakti* bringing about the world manifestation.

sthūla śarīra : The gross physical body made up from five gross physical elements (*mahābhutas*).

śuddha adhvā : The pure sphere of supra-manifestation in which the divine Śakti operates in pure consciousness form; the *tattvas* beginning with Śiva upto *śuddha vidyā* exist in this sphere.

śuddha vidyā : The fifth level of universal manifestation counting from *Śiva tattva*; the two poles in self-experience as 'I' and 'this' are equally prominent with the thread of identity running through them; the *kriyā* aspect is predominant on this level.

śuddha vikalpa : The pure thought based on self-experience as Śiva.

sūkṣma śarīra : The inner subtle body technically called *puryaṣṭaka*, also called *ātivāhika deha*.

śūnya pramatā : Objectless experient; *pralayākala*.

sūrya : Symbol of *prāṇa*; *sūrya nāḍī*, symbol of the channel called *iḍā* through which *prāṇa* flows.

suṣupti (apavedya) : The dreamless state of the experient in which there is complete absence of any kind of any experience.

suṣupti (savedya) : The dreamless state of the experient in which the experience of pleasure, lightness etc. persists.

svātantrya śakti : Power of divine Freedom; the divine Śakti of the Supreme Lord named on account of her unrestricted nature.

tamas : A constituent of *Prakṛti*, symbolising the principle of inertia and darkness.

tanmātrā : Lit. that only; the subtle physical elements, viz., *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha*.

tattva : Lit. that-ness, the very being of a thing; macrocosmically a level of creation, microcosmically a principle, a constituent element.

Trika : The philosophical school of spiritual thought based on the triad of Nava, Śakti and Śiva or *parā*, *parāpara* and *apara* symbolising the highest signifying philosophical thought of identity, of identity in difference, and difference.

trika : (*Para*) *prakāśa*, *vimarśa* and their *sāmarasya*; (*apara*) *iccha*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*.

turīya : The fourth state of consciousness beyond the states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, all stringed together in the fourth state.

turīyatīta : The state of consciousness transcending the *turīya*, with the distinction between all other states fully obliterated; the state of blissful consciousness.

uccāra : A particular mode of concentration of *prāṇaśakti* prescribed under *āṇava upāya*.

ucchalatā : The creative movement of divine *ānanda* in waves, bringing about manifestation and withdrawal of the world manifestation.

udāna : The vital *vāyu* that moves upwards.

unmeṣa : Lit. opening the eyes; the unfoldment of the universe existing as identified with the ever-active divine Śakti.

vaikharī : *Parāvāk* manifested as gross word.

varṇa : Letters of the *devanāgarī* alphabet symbolizing different phases of the divine Śakti and the *tattvas*.

vijñānākala : A particular kind of experient, unembodied, staying below the *śuddha vidyā* level but above *māyā*, having pure awareness but devoid of agency (*kartṛtva*), classed among *paśu pramātā* (fettered beings) on account of being encased by *āṇavamala* but devoid of *māyīya* and *kārma malas*.

vikalpa : Thought construct.

vikāsa : Unfoldment of the universe existing identified with Parama Śiva as His Śakti.

vimarśa : Power of self-awareness in the pure Consciousness (*caitanya*) which involves and includes powers of knowledge (*jñāna*) and act (*kriyā*) as co-existent powers; the power of self-awareness innate in the Supreme Lord is

responsible for His self-experience as *pūrṇāhaṁtā* and possessing Supreme Knowledge and Supreme Agency.

visarga : Emanation, symbolically represented by two dots placed vertically.

viśvamaya : All-pervasive, immanent.

viśvottīrṇa : Transcendent.

vyāna : *Prāṇa* in pervasive form.

vyāpaktva : The characteristic all-pervasiveness inherent in the Divine Being of the Supreme Lord.

yoni : Womb, source; *yonivarga* — nine classes of consonant letters symbolizing different *tattvas*.

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  A Commentary on the Spandakārikā by Bhagavadutpalācārya
  Edited by Mark S.G. Dyczkowski
- **मीमांसा-पदार्थ-विज्ञानम्** (Sanskrit & Hindi)
  काशीनाथ न्यौपाने

Ancient Indian tradition traces the origins of the Śaiva cult to the Āgamic thought current. The emergence of the Trika school of Śaivism in Kashmir marks the climax in the development of the Advaita Śaiva thought, being backed up by a rich Sanskrit literature. The doctrine of recognition *(pratyabhijñā)* constitutes the cardinal doctrine in the philosophy of the Advaita Śaiva School. The *sādhaka*(spiritual seeker) has to try to discover his real being by removing the various veils, to thereafter recognize his true essence.

The Advaita Śaivas describe the nature of the Supreme Reality, one without a second, in two different ways namely, as *Caitanya* or *Saṁvid* as an abstract metaphysical principle *(nirākāra tattva)* as well as Parama Śiva and Parameśvara possessing a form *(sākāra Being)* They also describe the Supreme Reality as the transcendent Absolute *(anuttara)* and at the same time as all-pervasive Reality *(viśvātmaka)*.

The Advaita Śaiva philosophers have not only shed light on the process of the world manifestation in the conventional way, they have added a new dimension to it by describing it in terms of involution on the part of *Caitanya* to the gross level of matter; or as the unfoldment on the part of the Supreme Lord out of His free will, exercising His *svātantrya śakti*, or as His self-extension in the aspect of His Śakti. They mention seven different kinds of experients or subjects (embodied, unembodied, and disembodied), a concept unique in the annals of Indian philosophy.

The concept of *purṇāhaṁtā* (pure I-experience) symbolizing the fullness-nature of the Supreme Experient, i.e. Śiva *pramātā*, different from the ego-experience *(ahaṁkāra)* of the limited embodied beings, has been explained in this book in esoteric terms as it marks a unique contribution of Kashmir Śaivism to Indian philosophical thought.

Dr. Debabrata Sen Sharma, a well-known scholar of Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy and Religion, has spent more than half a century in studying, teaching and writing on the Advaita Shaiva thought of Kashmir.

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